EQUESTRIAN STATUE

OF

GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER

UNVEILING CEREMONIES

MONROE, MICH.

JUNE 4, 1910.

Class E467
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Book C99M6

By transfer
The White House
March 3rd, 1913

1911

GENERAL CUSTER

CEREMONIES

ATTENDING THE *UNVEILING* OF THE *EQUESTRIAN STATUE* TO *MAJOR GENERAL GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER* BY THE STATE OF MICHIGAN, AND FORMALLY DEDICATED AT THE *CITY OF MONROE, MICHIGAN*, JUNE FOURTH, NINETEEN HUNDRED AND TEN : : :

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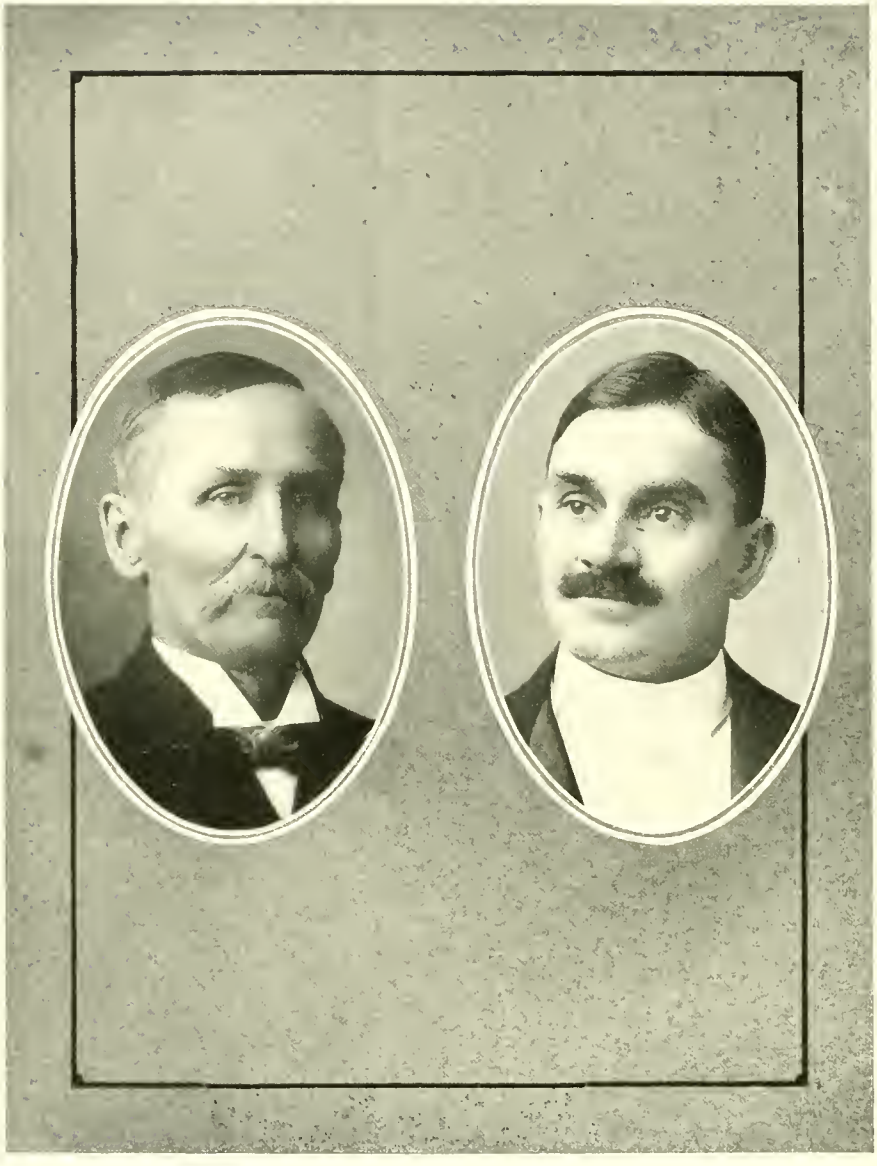
CAPT. NEGUS
MR. GREENING



CAPT E L NEGUS

MR CHAS E GREENING

Act of the Legislature

Providing for the Erection of the Statue

After Gettysburg, the name of Michigan was closely linked with that of Custer. The Michigan Brigade was his first command, and its survivors always felt that the State should do something to perpetuate his memory. They believed that the project might properly be given a national character by looking to Congress for action. Hope of that soon died, however, and the only course appeared to be to ask the State for the needed legislation.

At a reunion of the Michigan Cavalry brigade association in the year 1905, a committee was appointed to draft a bill providing for the erection of a statue on the Capitol grounds. This committee consisted of three members, viz: Colonel George G. Briggs, Grand Rapids; General James H. Kidd, Ionia; and Captain Edward L. Negus, Chelsea. This committee decided in favor of an equestrian statue of bronze, and reported that fifty thousand dollars would probably be the minimum sum required to erect a monument befitting the man and the State.

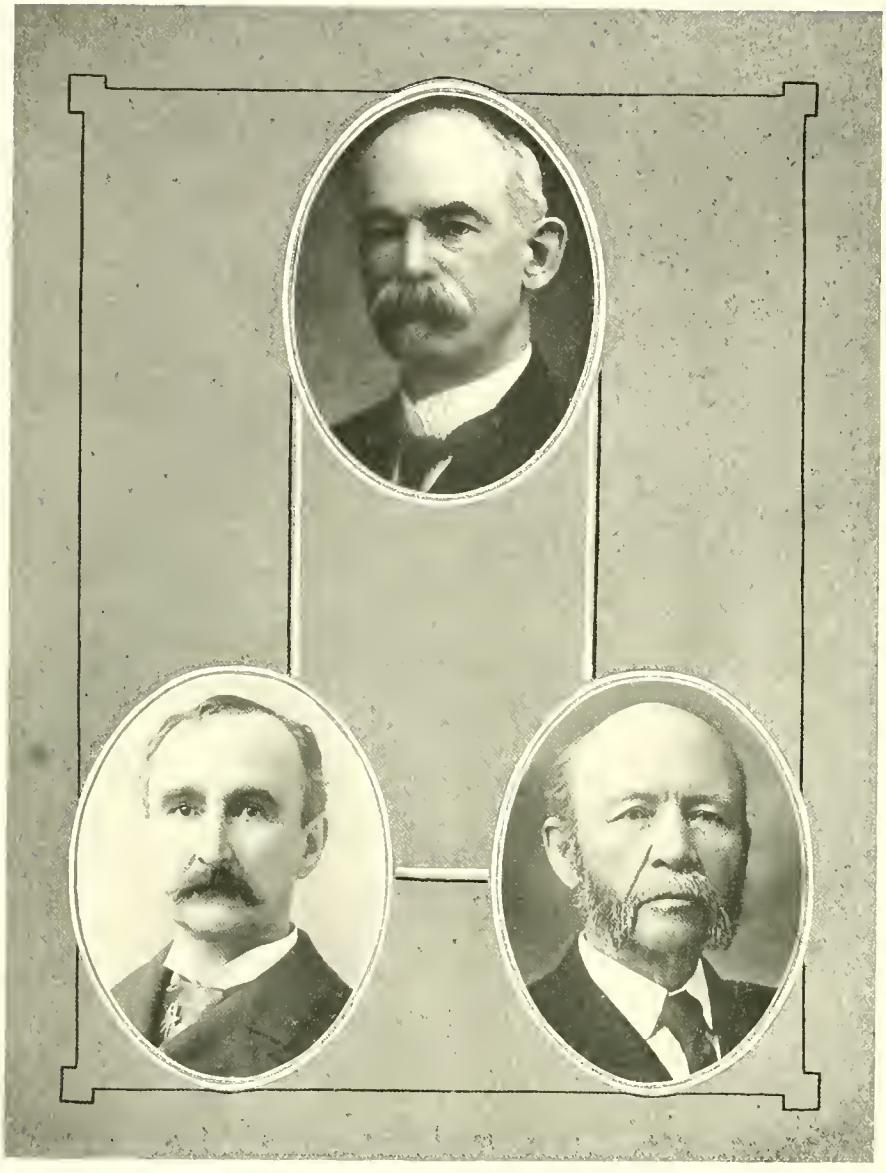
A bill was drawn and placed in the hands of Senator Andrew C. Fyfe, who became sponsor for it in the legislature. It was introduced in the senate January 22, 1907.

In the meantime, the "Custer Memorial Association" of Monroe, of which Mr. Charles E. Greening was the most zealous and efficient secre-

tary, had prepared a bill kindred in character, but which named that city as the site of the statue. This was introduced by Senator Kline at the same session of the legislature.

It was soon seen, at least it was believed, that strife over the location would result in no legislation at all and postpone formal action indefinitely. A conference was called in Lansing, the result of which was that the Cavalry brigade committee agreed to substitute the word Monroe for that of Lansing, if the other side would consent to give the Fyfe bill, thus amended, the right of way. This was done. The ways and means reduced the appropriation to $25,000, and the bill passed. It received the signature of the Governor, and became a law June 27, 1907.

THE MONUMENT COMMISSION



COL. GEO. C. BRIGGS

GEN. JAMES H. KIDD

LIEUT. FREDERICK A. NIMS

An Act:

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE ERECTION AT THE CITY OF MONROE, MICHIGAN, OF AN EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF GENERAL GEORGE A. CUSTER.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

Section 1. There is hereby appropriated from any moneys in the state treasury not otherwise appropriated, the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars, to erect, at the city of Monroe, in the state of Michigan, an equestrian statue of General George A. Custer, to pay the commissioners appointed by this act to carry it into effect, and for other expenses as may, in the judgment of the commission, be actually necessary.

Section 2. The governor shall, within thirty days after the passage of this act, appoint a commission consisting of three officers or soldiers who served in the Michigan Cavalry brigade, to carry same into effect. The actual expenses of such commission shall be paid out of the funds herein appropriated, and they shall report to the governor of the state of Michigan immediately upon the fulfillment of their duties, and such report shall embrace in detail, an abstract of expenditures made, with vouchers therefor.

Section 3. The auditor general shall add to and incorporate into the state tax for the year nineteen hundred eight, the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars, to be assessed, levied and collected, as other state taxes are assessed, levied and collected, which sum when collected shall be placed to the credit of the general fund to reimburse it for the sum appropriated by section one of this act.

This act is ordered to take immediate effect.

Approved June 27, 1907.

To carry out the provisions of this statute, Governor Warner appointed Colonel George G. Briggs, General James H. Kidd, and Leutenant Frederick A. Nims commissioners. The two first named commanded regiments in the Michigan cavalry brigade. Mr. Nims served on Custer's staff. The commission organized by naming Chairman Briggs secretary and treasurer. The correspondence and details mostly fell to him, though there were frequent conferences and unanimity characterized all decisions.

Now that the work is done, it is a source of great satisfaction to the commissioners that it is so well done. It was to them from the beginning a labor of love. Without seeming to trench upon the subject matter of the commissioners' report, it may not be amiss to say that the statue, through the symbolism of art, realizes fully the ideals that were in the minds of its projectors. So far as it is possible for pulsing life to be mirrored in inanimate bronze, it is lifelike; in face, figure and pose a faithful presentment of man and soldier as he appeared when he led his Michigan troopers against Stuart's cavalry, on the Rummel fields at Gettysburg. It is a noble work of art, creditable alike to the memory of Custer, the genius of the sculptor and the commonwealth of Michigan.

THE MONUMENT

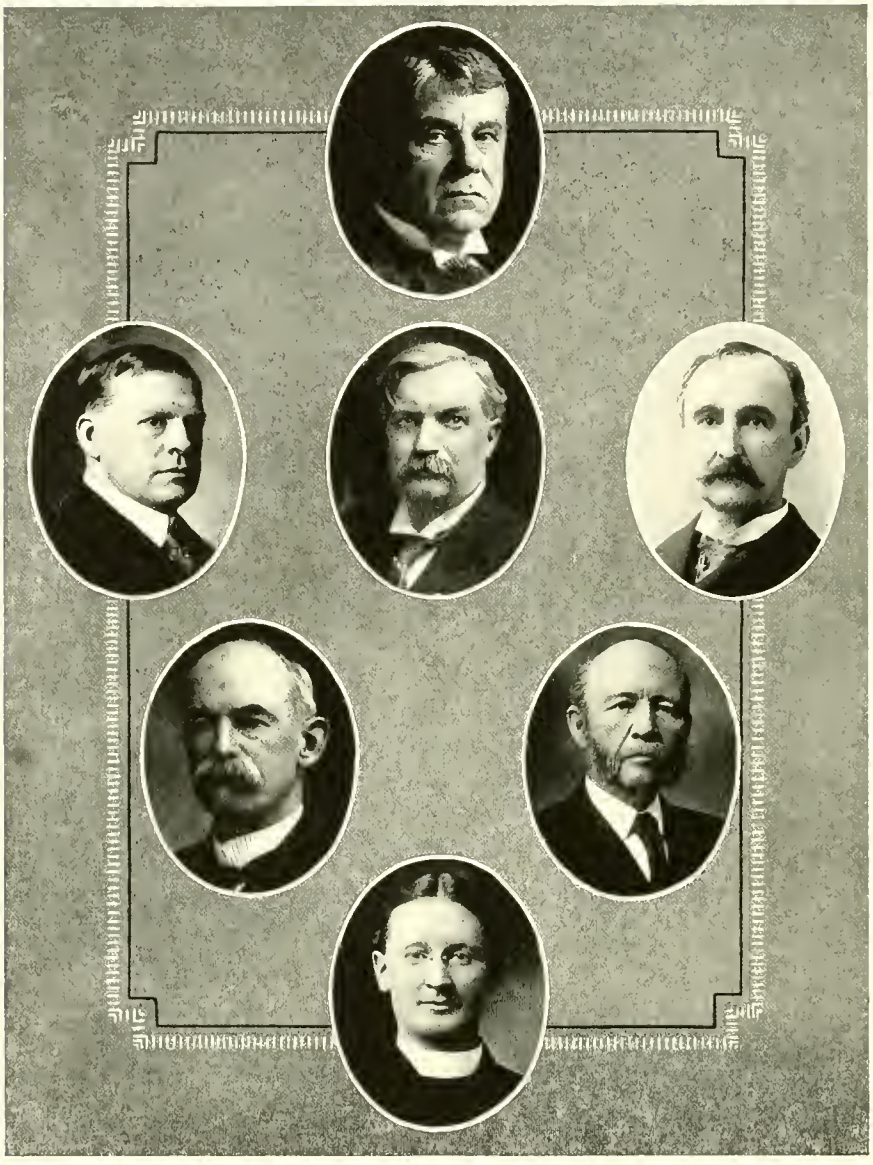
ERECTED
BY
THE
STATE
OF
MICHIGAN
CUSTER

The Statue, and Its Unveiling

The contract with Mr. Potter, the sculptor, was made February 21, 1908. The statue was to be ready for dedication October 1, 1909. Various causes conspired to delay the work, chief among which was the condition of the sculptor's health. In the spring of that year his physicians prescribed absolute rest. Progress upon the full-sized model was for a time suspended. An extension of time was found necessary and, to avoid the hazard of bad weather so late in the season, May 1, 1910, was agreed to as the date of completion, and the contract changed accordingly.

The intention was to have the unveiling on a day commemorative of some battle in which General Custer led his Michigan brigade to victory. May 6, anniversary of the Wilderness; May 11, of Yellow Tavern; May 28, of Haw's shop; June 11, of Trevilian Station; and June 30, of the day when he assumed command of the brigade, were all considered. But, in the end, June 4 was chosen for the reason that it was the one day when the President of the United States could be present.

THE UNVEILING COMMISSION



HON OTTO KIRCHNER

HON JAMES V BARRY GOVERNOR WARNER GEN JAMES H KIDD

COL GEO C BRIGGS LIEUT FREDERICK A NIMS

REV M J CROWLEY

Act Providing for the Unveiling of the Statue

AN ACT IN RELATION TO THE UNVEILING OF THE STATUE OF GENERAL GEORGE A. CUSTER IN THE CITY OF MONROE, AND MAKING AN APPROPRIATION THEREFOR.

The People of the State of Michigan enact:

Section. 1. It shall be the duty of the governor, within thirty days after this act shall take effect, to appoint a commission which shall have charge of all the services incident to the unveiling of the statue of General George A. Custer in the city of Monroe. The said commission shall consist of six members, and at least three of its members shall be officers or soldiers who served in the Michigan Cavalry brigade. The governor shall be ex-officio a member of the said commission. The members of said commission shall not receive any compensation for the performance of any services, but shall be entitled to such expenses as are actually and necessarily incurred in order to carry out the provisions of this act. The said commission may, if practicable, arrange to have a section of a battery of artillery and two or more companies of infantry present at the unveiling of said statue; to arrange a program suitable for the occasion, and to provide for the expense of procuring speakers; to provide suitable souvenir badges to be distributed to the survivors of Custer's Michigan Cavalry brigade; to provide for printing a suitable volume containing the history of the statue and a record of the proceedings and speeches delivered at the unveiling of the said statue, which volume shall be similar to that heretofore issued by the state, entitled "Michigan at Gettysburg," and to arrange any and all such other matters as

may be properly and necessarily incident to the unveiling of the said statue.

Section 2. The sum of two thousand dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated out of the general fund in the state treasury to be used within the discretion of the said commission to defray the expenses necessarily incurred in carrying out the provisions of this act. All bills shall be paid when properly approved by the board of state auditors upon proper vouchers rendered therefor. Any part or portion of the sum herein appropriated which shall not be used, shall be paid into the general fund in the state treasury.

Section 3. The auditor general shall add to and incorporate in the state tax for the year nineteen hundred nine the sum of two thousand dollars, to be assessed, levied and collected as other state taxes are assessed, levied and collected, which sum shall be used to reimburse the general fund in the state treasury for the amount appropriated by this act.

This act is ordered to take immediate effect.

Approved May 18, 1909.

The governor named as unveiling commissioners: Hon. Otto Kirchner, Detroit; Hon. James V. Barry, Lansing; Father M. J. Crowley, Monroe; and the three members of the original statue commission. The commission met in the executive parlor in the Capitol, March 16, 1910, All were present except Father Crowley. Mr. Kirchner was chosen vice-chairman and acting chairman; Mr. Barry, secretary-treasurer; Messrs. Kidd and Briggs committee on program; Messrs. Kirchner and Barry committee on orator for the occasion; Mr. Nims committee on music.

THE MONUMENT

CUSTER
ERECTED
BY
THE
STATE
OF
MICHIGAN

The Program

OF

CEREMONIES ATTENDING THE UNVEILING OF THE

EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF

MAJOR GENERAL GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER.

ERECTED BY

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

CONFORMABLY TO AN ACT OF THE LEGISLATURE.

MONROE, MICHIGAN,

JUNE 4, 1910.

HON. OTTO KIRCHNER, VICE-CHAIRMAN, Presiding.

Invocation by Right Reverend John S. Foley, Bishop of Detroit.

Report of Monument Commission by Colonel George G. Briggs, Chairman.

Remarks by the Sculptor, Mr. Edward C. Potter.

Unveiling of Statue by Mrs. Elizabeth B. Custer.

Salute of 17 guns by First Battery, Field Artillery, M. N. G., band playing "Star Spangled Banner."

Address by The President of the United States.

Oration by Senator William Alden Smith.

Remarks by Major General D. McM. Gregg, Commander of the Second Cavalry Division, Cavalry Corps, Army of the Potomac.

Remarks by Brigadier General Edward W. Whittaker.

Poem by Will. Carleton.

Presentation of Statue by Governor Fred M. Warner.

Response by Hon. Jacob Martin, Mayor of Monroe.

"America" by the band.

Placing of Laurel Wreaths at base of Monument by President William O. Lee, Michigan Cavalry Brigade Association. While these wreaths are being placed, "The Old Brigade" will be sung by a chorus of 75 voices.

Benediction by Right Reverend Chas. D. Williams, Bishop of Michigan.

HON. OTTO KIRCHNER

The Ceremonies

HON. OTTO KIRCHNER, PRESIDING

MR. KIRCHNER: Please come to order.

Mr. President, Mrs. Custer, Veterans of the Custer Brigade, Ladies and Gentlemen:

The people of the State of Michigan, gratefully appreciative of the splendid part he took in the war for the preservation of the nation, and in testimony of his ever-lamented martyrdom, suffered in the defense of the nation's sovereignty, have erected this equestrian statue to the memory of Major General George Armstrong Custer.

We have gathered, my friends, from all parts of this fair land, not only to witness the unveiling of the statue by the hand of her who was the companion and playmate of his boyhood; and who later, as his wife, shared the dangers that he passed and the hardships he endured in the defense of his country, but, that we may also bear testimony to the love and veneration with which the American people cherish his memory.

Upon what we do here today, I now call upon Bishop Foley to invoke the blessing of Almighty God.

BISHOP FOLEY

Invocation

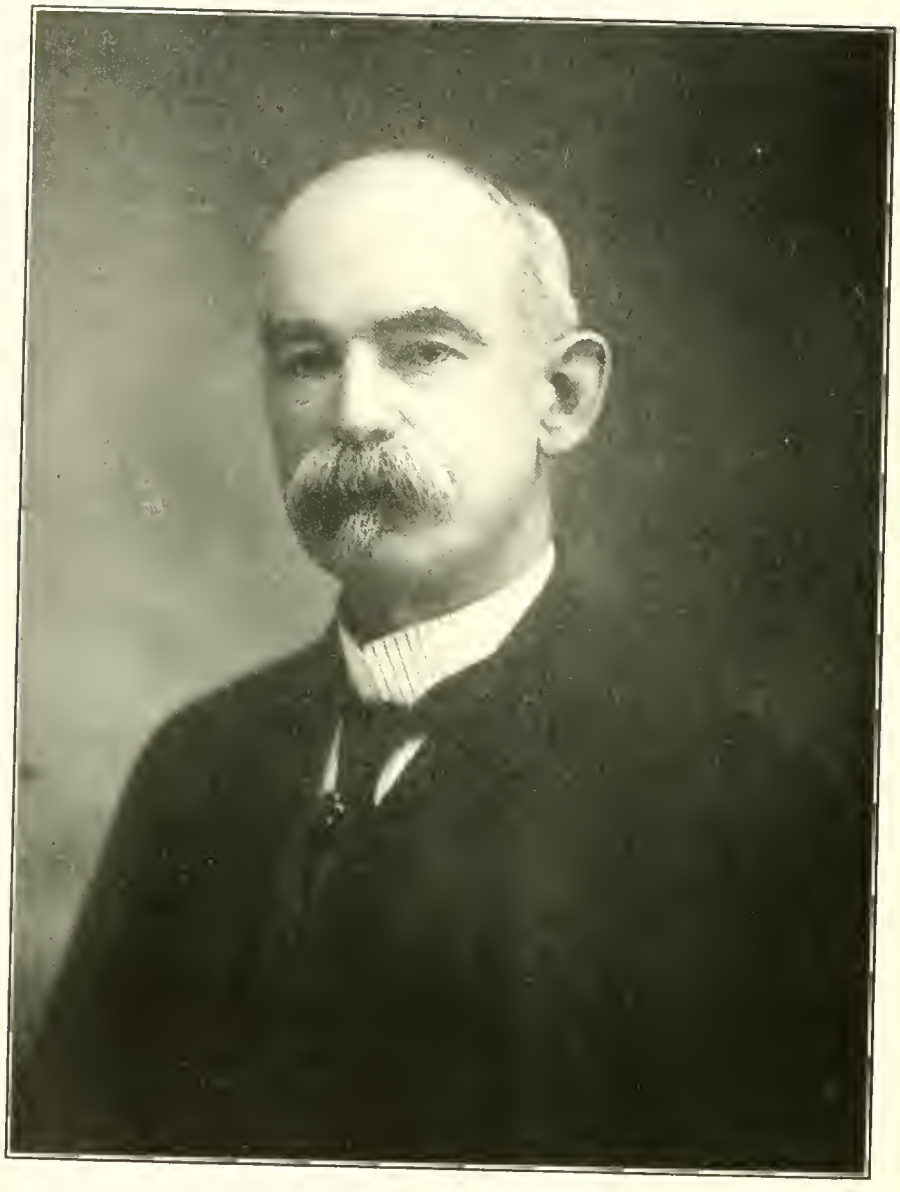
BY RIGHT REVEREND JOHN S. FOLEY,
BISHOP OF DETROIT

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, look down, we beseech Thee, O almighty and eternal God, upon Thy people here assembled. Illumine their understanding that they may know Thee. Inflame their hearts that they may love Thee and guide them that following the teachings and commandments of Thy Divine Son, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, they may attain eternal life.

We invoke Thee, O God of might, wisdom and justice, through whom laws are enacted and decreed, assist with Thy holy spirit of counsel and fortitude the President of these United States, that his administration may be conducted in righteousness, and be eminently useful to Thy people over whom he presides, by encouraging due respect for virtue and religion, by a faithful execution of the laws in justice and mercy, and by restraining vice and immorality. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Our Father, who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the Glory forever. Amen.

COL. GEO. C. BRIGGS



Report of the Commissioners

APPOINTED TO ERECT THE MONUMENT

MR. KIRCHNER: The making of this statue was committed, by the governor, to a commission appointed by him under an act of the legislature. That commission consisted of Colonel George G. Briggs, General James H. Kidd, and Lieutenant Frederick A. Nims.

We had expected Col. George G. Briggs to make a report of the stewardship of this commission, but he is not able to be with us today, and in his absence the report will be presented by General Kidd, whom I now have the honor to present to you.

The Report

YOUR EXCELLENCY, AND MR. PRESIDENT: The ceremony attending the formal dedication of the monument erected by the state to General George A. Custer, fittingly includes a word from the commission to whom was entrusted the supervision of its construction.

Having served under Custer, and having an unbounded admiration for his great qualities as a general of cavalry, as well as retaining a sense of gratitude for his helpful counsel and unwavering friendship, the work entrusted to the commission was at once invested with a personal interest, and enlisted from its members their best thought and conscientious effort. The one desire has been to provide a monument that should be a credit to the

state, and in every respect worthy the great soldier whose memory it would commemorate. It is believed, in this instance, that desire and accomplishment are happily joined.

The erection of every successful monument involves responsibility, much labor, and the exercise of good judgment. In meeting these requirements, both time and thought have been freely given by the commission. In the choice of sculptor, the commission had to decide between the claims of twenty-five applicants for the work. Pending the determination of a question of so much importance, consideration was given to the character of work already done by the different applicants, and to a careful study of the several sketch models which had been prepared and submitted for the proposed statue. The sculptor to be chosen, and the design of monument to be adopted, were questions of such importance that much time was given to their consideration. Including visits to New York, Greenwich, Elmsford and Newburg, where the studios of the different artists are located, four months were consumed in the solution of these problems. After carefully considering the claims and qualifications of the several sculptors in competition, it was decided to give the award to Mr. Edward C. Potter, of Greenwich, Connecticut. Results obtained justify the wisdom of his selection. Prior to receiving this last award, Mr. Potter had won recognition by the statue to General Hooker, at Boston, that of General Slocum at Gettysburg, General Devens, at Worcester, and numerous other meritorious works. It is not too much to claim for his statue to General Custer, his last work, that it will take rank with the

best achievements in the domain of sculpture. It is a work of art, and embodies the qualities of reality, and the spirit of life and action. In its conception and execution the statue is made to represent an incident of frequent occurrence in the experience of General Custer, and which may be fittingly termed "Sighting the Enemy." The advance of his horse is suddenly arrested, a rapid survey of the field is taken, to be followed by prompt orders that will place his command in position for the impending conflict. The pose of both horse and rider is excellent, while the likeness and youthful figure of the general is all that could be desired. It will be remembered that Custer was but twenty-four years of age at the time he was winning important victories with the Michigan cavalry brigade.

The pedestal of the monument, very beautiful in simplicity of line and grace of proportions, is after a design by Hunt & Hunt, a well-known firm of architects in New York. The bronze castings of the statue were made by Gorham & Company, New York, and the work is of the highest excellence. The pedestal is of polished Concord granite, and was supplied by Mr. John Swenson, Concord, New Hampshire.

In the matter of inscription, an innovation has been made upon the custom usually followed. It was the opinion of the commission that, in placing the single word "Custer" upon the pedestal, no higher tribute to his greatness could be paid; that the name alone embraced all that any inscription could tell—and much more. Excepting the words, "Erected by the State of Michigan," no other inscription has been used.

The contract with Mr. Potter provided for the payment to him of $24,000, which amount was to be paid in the following manner, to-wit: $5,000 when the working model of statue was approved; $7,000 when the full-size model in plaster was completed; $7,000 when the statue was successfully cast in bronze, and $5,000 when completed monument should be in place, and ready for dedication. The several payments were safeguarded by a bond of $24,000, running to the state of Michigan, and which was executed by Edward C. Potter, principal, and the Aetna Indemnity Company, New York, as surety. Mr. Potter has been paid the first three installments called for by the contract, and a voucher in his favor has been approved, for the last, or final payment.

The attitude of the commission towards the fund placed at its disposal was one of strict economy. The amount appropriated for the work was but $25,000, and it was a debatable question if a suitable monument could be had for the amount available to cover its cost. In this connection, it is perhaps worthy of record that, while the act creating the commission provided for pay to its members, and the employment of a secretary, the expenses thus authorized were not permitted to be a tax upon the fund. That every possible dollar of the appropriation might be available for use in securing a suitable monument, it was voted by the commissioners to make no charge for their services, and, for like reason, the employment of a secretary was dispensed with. The work of preparing necessary documents, the keeping of records, and the conducting of correspondence, involving the writing of many hundreds

of communications, was performed by the chairman of the commission.

In the prosecution of its mission, the commission made three trips to the studio of the sculptor at Greenwich, Connecticut, and one to the city of Monroe. The former were for the purpose of inspecting and approving the statue at the different stages of construction, and the latter for examination of the site selected for the location of the monument.

The expenses of the commission for railroad fares, hotel bills, books of record, postage stamps, express charges and stationery have been $647.72.

Of the appropriation there is an unexpended balance of $151.38 as shown by the following statement.

Amount of appropriation....		$25,000.00
Paid Edward C. Potter for Monument, per contract . .	$24,000.00	
Paid Geo. C. Mills for services as inspector.....	140.90	
Paid Maurier Bros. for cement walk around monument....	60.00	
Paid Commissioners to reimburse them for expenses . . .	647.72	
Amount remaining in fund to balance.....	151.38	
	$25,000.00	$25,000.00

In the performance of its work, the commission has had the active and intelligent assistance of Mrs. Custer. During the civil war, and later, upon the frontier, whenever the exigencies of the service would admit, Mrs. Custer was the general's constant

companion. Since the sad tragedy upon the Little Big Horn, in 1876, she has lived in the memory of her husband's splendid manhood, and has found comfort in recalling the happy days of their eventful lives. During all stages of the commission's work Mrs. Custer's interest has been constant, and her advice valuable. In supplying the sculptor with articles belonging to the general's war-time uniform, in aiding him to model a correct likeness, and in giving information concerning the general's figure and appearance, her aid has been of the utmost value.

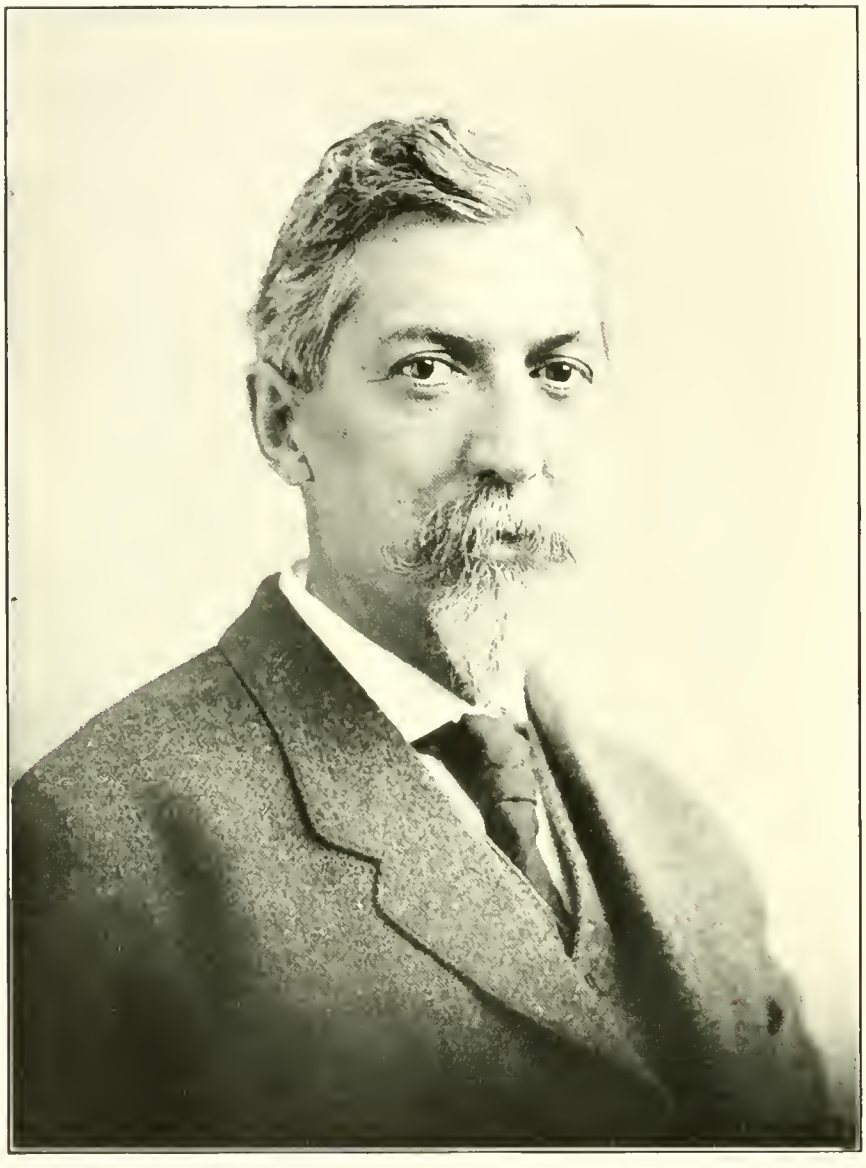
And now, your excellency, its work being finished, it only remains for the commission to relinquish its control of the monument, now ready for the dedication, and to give the same into your care and custody. In taking leave of a work which has received their devoted attention for so many months, the commissioners desire to express their obligations to you for having given them the privilege of assisting in the erection of a monument to their "Old Commander."

In providing this monument to General Custer, the state testifies its appreciation of the services rendered to the country by a loyal citizen and a great soldier. His name and fame will last while history shall endure, and the commonwealth honors itself by honoring his memory.

Col. Geo. G. Briggs,
Chairman.

Commissioners:
General James H. Kidd,
Col. Geo. G. Briggs,
Lieut. Frederick A. Nims.

EDWARD C. POTTER



Remarks of the Sculptor

Mr. Edward C. Potter

Mr. Kirchner: The design and production of the monument was entrusted to Mr. Edward C. Potter. I trust that, so far as his modesty will permit him to do so, he will tell us of the making of the statue. Mr. Potter has very kindly consented to be with us, and I have the great honor of presenting him to you now.

Mr. Potter: This is rather an exceptional thing for a sculptor to do. I never spoke before, for I am simply hired to make the statue, but I do want to thank the commission for the great assistance they gave me all during the work, and also Mrs. Custer. No man ever worked with men more enthusiastic and more helpful to the sculptor than the members of the Custer statue commission, and I want to thank them publicly.

I have been asked to speak about the making of the statue. I hardly know what to say about that, but I do want to speak about the position of the statue, as some criticism has been made of the way it is placed in the square. I came here two years ago with the commissioners to study the site so I might be better prepared to make the sketch. I made the sketch and submitted it to the commissioners and it was accepted. At the time I was here, I asked the commissioners to consider the placing of the heading of the statue toward the south. We all recognize the fact that naturally it would face toward the town, but unfortunately, the sun

travels around the statue on the south the greater part of the year, and we wanted the sunlight on the face of the man. Before it was fully decided to head it south, I put the statue in the plaster out in front of my study at Greenwich, Connecticut; showed it to several sculptors and the members of the commission, and we all decided it would be very unfortunate to have the statue placed so the face should be in the shadow most of the year. On the field at Gettysburg, it is usual to face a statue toward the line of the enemy, and I think it is very appropriate that the statue of Custer should face south, for whoever heard of Custer showing the tail of his horse to a Southerner?

MRS. CUSTER

The Statue Unveiled by Mrs. Custer

MR. KIRCHNER: Will you all rise while Mrs. Custer unveils the monument.

Mrs. Custer was escorted to the speaker's stand by President Taft, who stood just back of her while she pulled the yellow ribbon, the cavalry color, that unloosed the great flags and unveiled the monument at just 10:50 A. M., amid great applause. A salute of seventeen guns was fired by the battery while the band played "The Star Spangled Banner;" (all standing).

Letter of Appreciation from Mrs. Custer

Bronxville, New York,
July 23, 1910.

My Dear Governor Warner:

I had little opportunity to tell you how satisfactory I found it to work with the committee so wisely chosen by you to select the sculptor for my husband's statue.

They made me feel I could be of assistance to them, and yet I had no responsibility in the choice of the artist, and, being soldiers, they knew so well what a cavalry officer ought to be in bronze.

I thank you also for having honored me in your excellent address, and for every word you said of my husband.

In reading your tribute to him I feel the sincerity of your praise of General Custer, and especially appreciate the closing lines. That the beautiful statue should be an inspiration to the young is a thought I cherish from you.

It was the great day of my life, my dear governor, and not only was my heart filled with gratitude to my state, and my town, for all they had done to perpetuate my husband's memory, but I feel deeply the universal kindness shown me.

Most sincerely yours,

ELIZABETH B. CUSTER.

HON. WILLIAM ALDEN SMITH

The Oration

By Senator William Alden Smith*

Mr. Kirchner: I now have the honor of presenting the orator of the day, the Honorable William Alden Smith, a United States senator from the state of Michigan.

Senator Smith: Mr. President, Mrs. Custer, and Fellow Citizens:

On a beautiful day, under clear skies, with the shade of the trees which knew Custer as a youth, in the presence of magistrates and legislators, yea, in the presence of the chief magistrate of the nation Custer helped to save, in the presence of his loved one, before the church where he plighted his faith, under the auspices of his comrades of the civil war, we gather today to do honor to the distinguished dead.

In an atmosphere laden with patriotism, at a time when nature is arrayed in its most beautiful attire, in a city he dearly loved, among the friends of his boyhood, we gather to pay our tribute to the unconquered and unconquerable Custer.

Under the flag he dedicated to liberty on nearly a hundred battlefields, we come to pay the deserved honor which his life merited.

People of Michigan, your proud and grateful hearts outstrip my lips in pronouncing the name of General George Armstrong Custer. Perhaps he was not as patient as Grant; perhaps he was not as well

*Senator Smith preceded the President in his address at the latter's special request.

poised as Thomas; perhaps he was not as fascinating as Sheridan; yet he was bound heart to heart with these great men, absorbing all their separate gifts, and adding all his own wonderful and inspiring personality, he fused the whole into the brilliant glow of his all-inspiring energy, unerring perception and sublime will. As he gracefully moved among his comrades, a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, with brain and heart and conscience all alive to the gravity of our country's peril; strongly entrenched in his own honesty, the gold of a kingdom could not buy him; enshrined in the love of his fellow countrymen, hostile arrows fell idly at his feet. He bore a commission from on high. He was a special messenger from God in America's greatest trial.

From the farmer's furrow, his burning ambition burst forth, and John A. Bingham of Ohio, he of pleasant memory, touched the spark that was destined to illumine a continent; from a village school in poverty and distress, Congressman Bingham set him upon the banks of the Hudson river where Grant and Lee mastered the arts of war. He passed as naturally to his position as a bird in its flight, and the experience of West Point transformed this inexperienced Michigan boy into a veritable hurricane of war. Tender and affectionate in his home, loving and dutiful as a son, loyal and devoted to his girl wife, whom I take pleasure in saluting in behalf of the commonwealth who love you as Custer loved you.

Our flag is brighter, more inspiring and beautiful because of the daring heroism of the intrepid soldier, the idol of the Michigan brigade. Clean

and manly in his private life, he exemplified the highest soldierly attainments.

As a mere boy he planted his flag in the thickest of the battle, in the southland he never lost a cannon or a color; his name was the synonym of virtue and valor. Flaxen-haired, blue-eyed, lithe in figure, straight as an arrow, his long hair setting off a countenance upon which the God of Nature must have pondered as he set it upon the shoulders of a man. No situation in the war was too bewildering for Custer—no, wherever he led, his intrepid followers were eager to follow him. His manner was so prepossessing, his sense of justice so acute, his leadership so masterful that danger was to him a joyful pastime, while the roll of cannon was music to his ears.

Lee and Custer served together in the Fifth United States cavalry when they were boys. They separated at West Point, one going to the north where he was needed, the other to the south where he was loved.

Had it not been for the dogged persistency of Custer at Cedar Creek, in the Shenandoah Valley, fearlessly battling away against great odds, Sheridan would not have found the situation he did when he rode from Winchester, twenty miles away. Had it not been for Custer and the Michigan brigade at the Yellow Tavern, where he rendered such a great service to his country, where the great rebel cavalry leader, J. E. B. Stuart, met his first defeat and lost his life, I verily believe that those soldiers of Sheridan would have found themselves in a predicament difficult to extricate them from. But why should I rehearse a story with which you are more

familiar than myself? Before your eyes a living panorama was enacted; in the center of that tragedy, your idol was a hero. We come today to do honor to one of the most inspiring soldiers of the civil war. Out of the smoke and carnage of Gettysburg; out of the patient vigil on the long march and the momentous danger; amid the dead and dying—blue and gray—came the flaxen-haired boy soldier of the union at the head of all that was left of the granite-like Michigan brigade.

In capturing the Lynchburg pike and Appomattox station and taking away the stores and artillery of Lee's army, Custer contributed to the final peace of the war. Custer, on the firing line at Appomattox, was the first to receive the flag of truce; one of Custer's soldiers was the first federal officer within the rebel lines, and he told me as I was leaving Washington, that when the flag of truce was waved to the Michigan Brigade and the soldiers of Meade and Grant, that he asked Custer what order he had to give. Custer said: "You accompany Major Sims to Generals Gordon and Longstreet, and say to them that I am powerless to suspend the fighting unless the surrender of the Confederate soldiers is unconditional."

General Whittaker, of pleasant memory, said that the surrender was unconditional. I said to a Confederate follower of General Gordon only day before yesterday, "What took place when Gordon and Longstreet concluded that they would wave the white flag?" He said, "Gordon said to his chief of staff, 'Go and get a white flag of truce;' the officer retired and soon reappeared and said to General Gordon, 'There ain't a white flag in the

Confederate army;' Gordon said, 'Go and get a white handkerchief;' the man was gone several minutes, and when he returned he said to his chief, 'General, there isn't a white handkerchief in the Confederate army;' General Gordon said to his chief of staff, 'Go and get a white shirt,' and after an absence of twenty minutes, this Confederate says, that the chief of staff returned and reported to Gordon that there wasn't a white shirt in the Confederate army, and the only thing that could be used was a half dirty, half white piece of toweling. That toweling was waved by Major Sims in the face of the fire of the Michigan brigade under Custer's command." And two or three days ago Mr. Garey told me that he loaned Custer his white handkerchief with which to return the salutation of peace, and I believe that handkerchief is now in the possession of the beautiful Mrs. Custer. He was on the firing line, and his soldiers knew no limitation upon their valor.

Custer had the habit of carrying his colors whenever he went into battle. Whoever captured the colors of a rebel soldier was made a staff officer under Custer, and rode with him by his side into every engagement until he was compelled to pass his colors over to the war department. It is said that Custer presented the most inspiring figure of all the soldiers in appearance, with these colors of the enemy floating over the heads of his victorious following.

General Sheridan has written to Mrs. Custer, the day following the peace at Appomattox, telling her that the nation should always be proud of the part Custer took in the Appomattox campaign.

My fellow-countrymen, he rode at the head of the third division of the Army of the Potomac, down Pennsylvania avenue, to be reviewed by the president at the close of the war; he was the most inspiring figure in that parade. Custer rode with wreaths and flowers on a horse, a race horse I believe, which he captured in North Carolina. The people cheered this idol; the people greeted him everywhere; in the enthusiasm of the hour Custer's horse ran away, but not so with the driver. He climbed to any occasion; he righted up that $9,000 racer in less time than it took to tell, as he would have guided him to his place in the face of the enemy.

My fellow-countrymen, the soldiers of the civil war have left us a proud legacy. We should all appreciate it. What can we do to show our appreciation? Can we not absolve skepticism and vituperation from the respectable walks of American soldierly and public life? I hope we can. Open wide the windows of your soul and let in the optimism of Custer and bid farewell to the skepticism of his critics. It is a signal and brilliant occasion; this new resolution should be made; the price of American citizenship should come a little higher after this ceremony than before.

We make our citizens too freely in America. I welcome the armies of industrious aliens from any shore; the broad bosom of Columbia will give welcome to any who are willing to call her mother, but those aliens and un-American armies, who march under a red flag in preference to the emblem of our citizenship, are a menace to our country. Men did not give up their lives; soldiers have not hobbled through life; mothers have not become widows

and given their children to the war, only to have the ignorant and the vicious of other lands set the marks of American patriotism.

Have a care for Columbia. Let not from her brow the stars be torn and trampled in the dust, for so it was in the vandal-trampled Rome and, where the palace of the Caesar stood, the lone wolf unmolested makes her lair. Here the patriot plants his flag; here the young are taught to love their country and flag, which should bind each other to loyalty; where generosity should kindle its fires and bring forgotten truth to the eyes of men, let this country last, by God's great blessing, to the human race; not where party or nationality must be sacrificed; not where marked compromises must be considered—these are the seeds of vice, war and national disorganization, and my advice to those disturbing elements who march under a red flag in preference to our own, is that they better lower their flag and become citizens of the purest and best republic on the earth, or leave our country for our country's sake.

Wave proudly and grandly, O flag of our country; from each of thy folds let some patriotic instinct go out; from each star let every empire see its duty and every republic find its hope.

My countrymen, you and I will some day appreciate the fact that the men who are all about us today gave us our liberty, and it is our duty to follow in the patriotic footsteps they have so generously set.

Now, my countrymen, I want to acknowledge my great debt of gratitude to the President of the United States for his courtesy in asking me to pre-

cede him upon this occasion. It is indeed a great compliment to have the foremost citizen in the world present. While you remember Lincoln, Washington. Jefferson and Adams are in our memories a benediction to our United States; while you remember Lincoln and Garfield and Grant and McKinley and the noble Harrison and the intrepid Roosevelt, and others of that illustrious line, our president, in character, in breadth of fitness, in determination, in kindly affection, in patriotism and love of country, is the peer of them all.

I thank you again and again, Mr. Chairman, for the high honor you have conferred upon me. I know how illy I have met your expectations, but from a sick bed to a scene like this would be an inspiration to any man. I extend to you the greetings of a full heart.

And, to Mrs. Custer, I wish that this day may give her renewed life and vigor to live in the memory of one who is idolized by every citizen of Michigan.

PRESIDENT WILLIAM H. TAFT

The Address

By William H. Taft,

President of the United States

Mr. Kirchner: It is most fit that this occasion should be graced by the presence and active participation of the President. As our chief magistrate, representing the power and dignity of the nation, he is, I am sure, at all times and in all places, within the ample folds of the stars and stripes, most cordially welcome. But we of Michigan take special delight in his presence, because William Howard Taft was not only well known to, but well beloved by the people of Michigan long before, as well as since, his present great office came to him. My friends, I have the great pleasure and honor of presenting to you upon this occasion, at the same time and in the same person, our friend William Howard Taft, and the President of the United States.

(Long continued applause.)

The President: Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Custer, Fellow Citizens of Michigan and of the United States, Ladies and Gentlemen:

After the most appropriate and eloquent oration by your distinguished senator in congress from Michigan, there remains but little for me to say. He spoke on behalf of the people of Michigan, and spoke most of those services which Custer rendered during the civil war, in which the state of Michigan took rightly a special pride, and looks back to the memory of Custer with especial gratitude.

A typical soldier, a great cavalry commander, a man whose memory brings out of the past the names of the greatest cavalry commanders of the world, Murat, Prince Rupert and others, he stands equal with all of them. From Bull Run to Appomattox, in every bloody battle of the army of the Potomac, he was the right arm of the commander of the forces as the leader of the cavalry corps and the cavalry brigade. A brigadier-general at twenty-three, a major-general at twenty-five, he showed in his life that same worth and force that we have in most of the great military commanders of the world.

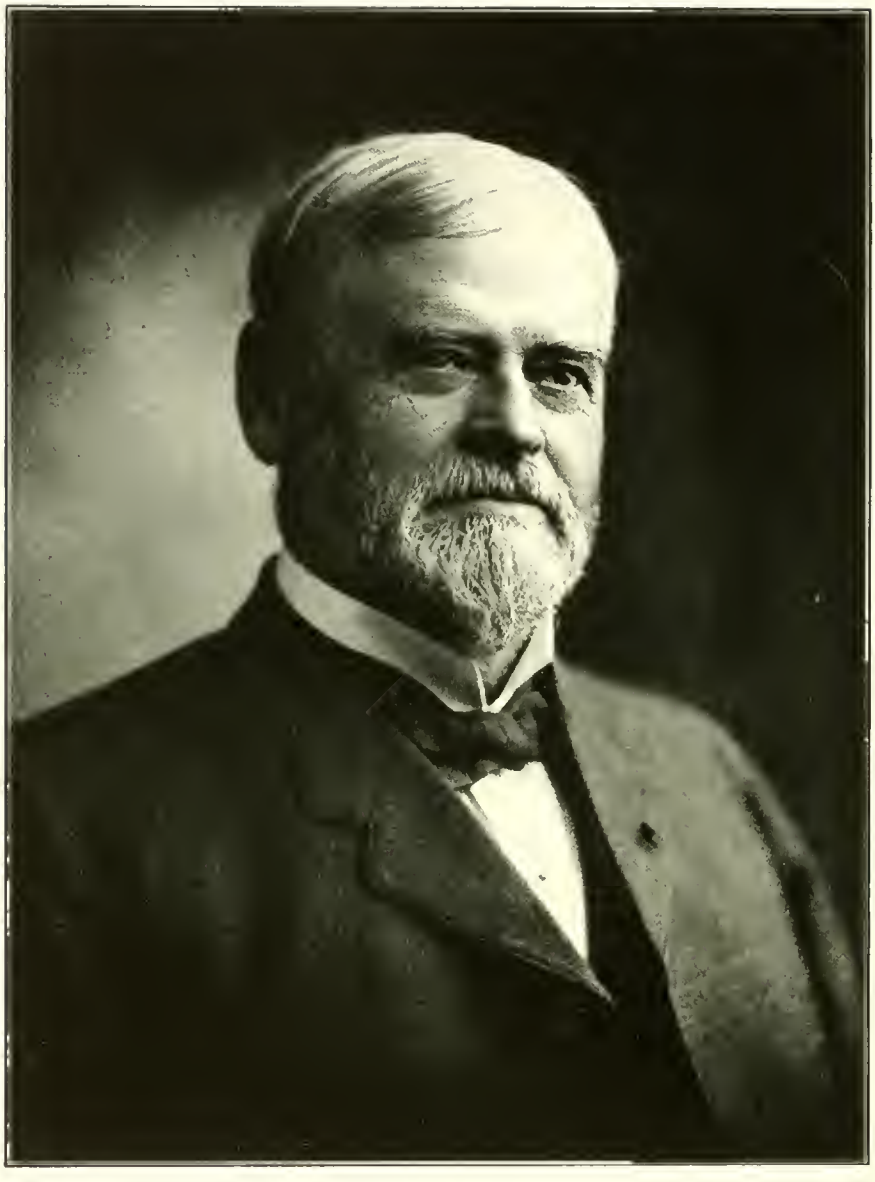
But, I came here, my friends, to speak today of a phase of General Custer's career that is not dwelt upon with as much emphasis and gratitude as I think it deserves. He stood among the heroes of the civil war, and for four years he led his cavalry in the defense of the flag to unite the union. But, after the war, for ten years he rendered a service to his country that we do not as fully appreciate as I wish we did. He was one of that small band of twenty-five thousand men constituting the regular army of the United States, without whose service, whose exposure to danger, whose loss of life, and whose hardships and trials it would not have been possible for us to have settled the great west. The story of that campaign of ten or fifteen years, in which that small body of men led by the generals who had been at the head of their tens of thousands in the civil war, and who now only had under them hundreds where they had had tens of thousands before, we do not know as well as we should. The trials, the cruelty, the dangers they had to undergo in protecting the moving settler toward the west, in

GEN. D. McM. GREGG

making the building of railroads possible, and in putting down and driving out the bloody Indians whose murders made the settlement, until they were driven out, impossible. That regular army is an army of whom the United States may well be proud, and the officers' wives, of whom Mrs. Custer is so conspicuous and charming an example, contributed their full share to the efficiency, to the bravery and courage of that small body of heroes. And, I am here not to dwell upon it, but only to note, as the President of the United States, the indebtedness of the country to the regular army during those ten or fifteen years in opening the west, and to testify to the effectiveness and heroism of General George Armstrong Custer in that great battle continued for a decade; to that great war for civilization, of which he was the most conspicuous and shining sacrifice.

Mr. Kirchner: We had expected to have with us today General Gregg, but old age and disability contracted in the service of his country have made it impossible for him to be here. Senator Julius Caesar Burrows has kindly consented to speak for him. He needs no introduction to the people of the state of Michigan, and I now have the honor to present to you the Honorable Julius Caesar Burrows.

HON. J. C. BURROWS



Remarks by Hon. J. C. Burrows

United States Senator

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: I did not agree to act as a substitute for anybody. I am drafted and, of course, obliged to surrender. I want to say at the very outset that I shall not attempt to make a speech. After the magnificent utterances to which you have listened, I only desire to say just a word or two in relation to this statue; magnificent in proportion; splendid in execution, it is a fitting tribute to the great man whom it represents. I do not know what its foundations are; but, if planted so deep as to rest on the eternal rock, it will not be more enduring than his fidelity. Had you burnished its sides until they were as resplendent as the noonday sun, it would not be brighter than his heroic deeds; had you chiseled his name in its granite so deep that it would defy the ravages of time, it would not be more enduring than his fidelity; had you lifted the statue until it kissed the heavens, it would not be loftier than his heroic deeds. No statue can perpetuate his memory, but I congratulate the citizens of Monroe that you have in your midst this splendid statue of this splendid man. It is left to you for your keeping, but his name and his fame is not yours alone; it belongs to the state; it belongs to the nation; it belongs to liberty, and there it will remain forever. I thank you, my fellow citizens, and I have said this much to satisfy you that my friend made a mistake when he said I was going to take anybody's place, for I can't do it.

MR. KIRCHNER: General Whittaker, whom we had expected to see here, is likewise unable to be present, and the Hon. Charles E. Townsend, representative in Congress from the state of Michigan, will now address you in his place and stead. Mr. Townsend, will you come forward?

Mr. Townsend seemed to have left the stand and there was no response.

GEN. E. W. WHITAKER

HON. CHARLES E. TOWNSEND

WILL CARLETON

"The Heart and the Sword"

POEM, BY WILL CARLETON

MR. KIRCHNER: I have been thinking these many years that the muses have sung many songs to the high patriotism, the courage and heroism of General Custer, but it has been given to very few of us to understand their language or appreciate the music of their song Fortunately, we have with us today a distinguished citizen of our state, upon whom this gift has been bestowed in ample measure, who will now tell you what the muses have been pouring into his delighted ears. I now have the great honor to present to you Will Carleton.

"THE HEART AND THE SWORD"

He walked the streets of the staid old town—
    His step was boyish, his face was fair;
The rays from above came glinting down,
    And toyed with the locks of his sun-strown hair.
His look and his walk and his voice expressed
The themes and thoughts of a boy's unrest;
But where was the match to light the flame?
A journey to greatness mocked his soul,
But where was the path to the brilliant goal?
He was just a boy with a humble name,
Unhelped by a kinsman's wealth or fame:
"I must win my spurs," his proud heart cried,
"And earn the horse upon which I ride!"
"I must pierce the forest of glory," he said,
"And hew a path upon which to tread."
So walked Ulysses in days of yore,
On Ithaca's far-famed island shore;

So Caesar fondled, a weak-armed boy,
His mimic sword as a dangerous toy;
So in the Corsican's humble town,
Trudged young Napoleon up and down;
So with his humble hatchet of truth,
Walked Washington as a callow youth;
So Grant, unfollowed by gleaming ranks,
Along the Ohio's shifting banks;
So in the depths of a southern state
Walked Lincoln, not knowing that he was great;
So wandered along in boyhood's way,
Our peace-king, Taft, who is here today;
So wanders today some lonely boy,
Whom God is waiting to yet employ,
When youthful apprenticeship is through,
In something great He would have him do.
How know we but there may walk today
    These streets, in its dole and mirth,
A soul clad newly in childhood's clay,
    That sometime may shake the earth?
What visions came to our dreaming boy?
    What grandeurs assailed his eyes?
What fields of glory and thrills of joy
    His slumberings would surprise?
What gay clouds galloped across the sky,
Like cavalry-troops from camps on high?
Perchance the heroes of time-worn days
Came out of their tombs to greet his gaze,
Where giant palatial headboards rest
Their stone feet over the pulseless breast—
From battle-lands that their secrets keep
While guarding the unknown soldiers' sleep;
From Arlington's acres, where now waves
Our flag o'er twenty thousand graves,
Perhaps to his heart there came the thrill
Of thunder-echoes from Bunker Hill;
Perhaps he could hear the bullets' rain,
Of muskets yelling at Lundy's Lane;
Perhaps he could hear the billows break

Of Perry's victory on the lake:
Proud Erie that chants from shore to shore,
The song of that triumph o'er and o'er;
Perhaps he could hear the glorious fray
At Buena Vista or Monterey.
Perchance through rifts of his mind would glide
The day of the Raisin's red-stained tide.
The blood of which fame's long annals tell,
Can flow in a schoolboy's veins as well;
And heroes whose lips are cold and dumb,
Preach heroism for the lives to come.
What visions awoke the dreamy boy,
Of bravery fierce and turbulent joy?
He saw while within the school-room's door,
In his heart's gallery o'er and o'er,
War's moving pictures, that flashed him by:
He vowed a soldier to live and die.
Perchance when he saw the light-guards come,
With war's gay raiment and roll of drum,
And jauntily travel up and down,
The staring streets of the village-town,
Or when on the peaceful stretch of road,
Trooped saddled horses by men bestrode,
He felt the thrill of the loud drum-roll
Go tearing its path through his waiting soul.
He heard the song of the silver horns,
The fife, with its rythmic flowers and thorns,
The measured tread of the well-trained feet—
Live pendulums ticking along the street;
And these quick furnished a newer part
To something already in his heart.
Perchance, when he felt those lovelorn joys
That creep through the hearts of tiniest boys,
He vowed that the child-maid he adored
Should gaze at his prowess bye and bye,
And that the glitter of his sharp sword
With love should kindle her modest eye.
How soon the views of a larger life
Grow up, in the heart that's human!—

The boy has love for the future wife,
The girl is at heart a woman.
The soul of this boy sung the mingled song,
That love in the fiercest of conflict tells:
No wonder the thunder of war ere long,
Was softened with chimes of wedding bells!

He walked in the famous West Point town,
That clung to the Hudson's ragged side,
Where ancient mountains looked grandly down,
And lorded it over the rushing tide.
Brave hamlet! brimming with peaceful charms,
Yet full of the gleam and clash of arms!
And boys on whom, a few years hence,
The Nation would lean for a strong defence!
And teachers versed in the stern old art
Of tearing the lives of men apart,
In order that strife could the sooner cease,
And brothers the better could dwell in peace!
There must be war, as the world now stands,
With either the human heads or hands;
The friends of today are the former foes,
Men build on ruins, they still abhor;
And Peace is the pure white lily that grows
Far up through the blood-slimed waves of war.
E'en then does the stress of striving stay:
For Peace itself is a fight per day.

The flower would crumble bit by bit
But for the strifes that are stored in it—
Where forces are fighting face to face,
That each have the upper power and place.
A striving on earth we always see,
Where something that is not, is to be;
And ere the conflict is surely o'er,
Much that has been, is to be no more.

There was war in Heaven, from the Bible we find,
In which the devil came out behind:
There is war on earth, in which 'tis said
The devil at times comes out ahead:

Though yet he is ever too slow or fast,
And always loses the game at last.
Of course, some day, when the skies are fair,
We'll strike the Millennium straight and square:
And then, perhaps, with its pain and gore,
Will war be banished forevermore.

Let's toil that that day upon us smile!
And keep our army in shape meanwhile;
Let's pray that the good time draw more near!
And build us new warships every year.
Let's struggle that peace the world shall know,
If armies must fight to make it so!
When nations flout us and turn to foes,
And linger on Uncle Samuel's toes,
Let's read the doctrine that Christ e're taught—
For which he suffered and wept—and fought!
But if they won't have it, then, sad to tell,
Having offered them Heaven, we'll give them a spell.

The best there is in the shop—and see
That that's of the sort that it ought to be.
Let's toil, when conventions o'er and o'er
Decide that "men shall learn war no more,"
That sturdy armies stand still in view
To make those sweetest of words come true!
The valley is sheltered by mountain-rocks:
  Strong arms are the safeguards of affection:
We build 'gainst cyclone and earthquake shocks,
  And peace is not peace, without protection.

So mid the mountain's weird storms and dreams,
And near the murmurs of silver streams,
Transferred from schools where peace was might,
And where a felony 'twas to fight,
He came to an industry then as now
That made boys fighters and taught them how
To live with this precept within their ken:
Men may be fighters and still be men.
He paced that town, in his callow age,
As tigers roam in their narrow cage;

Made mischief, maybe?—well, God employs
His own quaint ways, to develop boys;
Broke rules?—'tis a part of the lore of school:
The breaking of rules oft proves the rule.
But still, much manliness helped him through—
For God had work for the boy to do.

Yes, God had work for the boy to do,
  Though strange it would seem that the King of Love
Made shedding of blood: but our Maker knew
  Unmakings that furthered his plans above.
Howe'er with theories we may hedge,
No nation can glitter without an edge;
And thousands at times the sword must rive
In order that millions may live and thrive.
Was not the boy soldier in God's sight,
Through Bull Run's mad tumultuous flight?
While cast in slumber's merciful chains,
Amid the pelt of the midnight rains,
May not the angels have bivouacked there,
And torn from his heart the word despair?
Grieved not the devils, that day he swore
The glass that murders to drain no more?
Smiled not the angels when one bright day
  He linked his life with a gentler one,
That guided and cheered him all the way,
  And glorified every duty done?
Were angels of grace not with him still,
When mocking at death on Malvern Hill?
Or when, perchance, by a danger braved,
The Battle of Gettysburg was saved?
Or when by the Rappahannock's banks,
Through thousands of foes, in serried ranks
He lashed his wondering horse to foam,
And shouted, "Come on boys! Bound for home!"
And baffling the foemen o'er and o'er,
He hewed his way to his friends once more;
Or when through village and city and farm
He raided as Sheridan's strong right arm,
Or when, in detail's drudgery-coil,

He harnessed to uncongenial toil;
Or when the endangered flag he tore
From its staff, and next to his brave heart wore;
Or when on the glittering Woodstock plain,
He spurred his horse with a slackened rein,
'Twixt two belligerent armies there,
Uncovered the depths of his yellow hair,
And waved his old chum a greeting-palm,
As General Wolfe to his friend Montcalm,
And seemed to say, ere the fight began,
"Give death to me if you dare and can!"
Half-circled the foe with saber and horse,
And as would a cyclone turned them back
And paved with many a new-made corse,
The field that he turned to a racing-track;
Or when, 'neath the stars and stripes flung loose,
The last Confederate flag of truce
Was next to his eager gauntlet laid,
With knowledge that soon 'twould be
The sheath of a grand heroic blade—
The sword of a Robert Lee?
A flag that the hour it was unfurled,
Flashed glimmers of light throughout the world!
'Mid all these hurryings to and fro,
His turbulent life was called to know,
With Death e'er hovering in the air,
And he yet living—was God not there?

The stars crept out in our Southern sky,
Scarce dimmed in the war-cloud's gloam,
And heroes who fought and did not die,
Marched into the camps of home.

And Peace once more with her gentle hand,
Was striving to soothe the death-strewn land:
But far in the west a cloud arose—
The wrath of our ancient Indian foes.
When born of patience too tense to last,
The days of treaties and truce were past,
He strove with a victory's blaze to pierce

That cloud's portentous gloom;
But foemen savage, numberless, fierce,
Had measured him for his tomb.
He stood with a heart that quailed for nought,
In circles of flashing flame,
And patiently waited and fiercely fought,
For help that never came.
No Balaklava with bugle-blast
And banners that fluttered high,
No brave-faced steeds went hurrying past:—
'Twas simply a place to die.
No Waterloo in that picture found
Though richly with blood 'twas draped:
Napoleon gathered his Old Guard round:
They perished—and he escaped.
But Custer his young guard tried and known
Best loved and nearest of kin;
He could have gone—for a way was shown—
But that he would call a sin.
He stayed with them to the utmost hour,
In letters of blood he wrote his name—
His saber fell with its final power,
And Custer died into deathless fame.

Sometimes there comes from the realms afar,
In untold distance, a blazing star;
And threading the lanes of space, it steers
Its way mid planets and atmospheres,
Perhaps with mystery-gifts, indeed,
That God in His mercy knows they need;
Then plumes itself for a farther flight,
And vanishes far from human sight,
We deeming, with what we wish and learn,
That with some future it will return:
And so we will hope, believe, and pray,
That Custer's soul is with us today.

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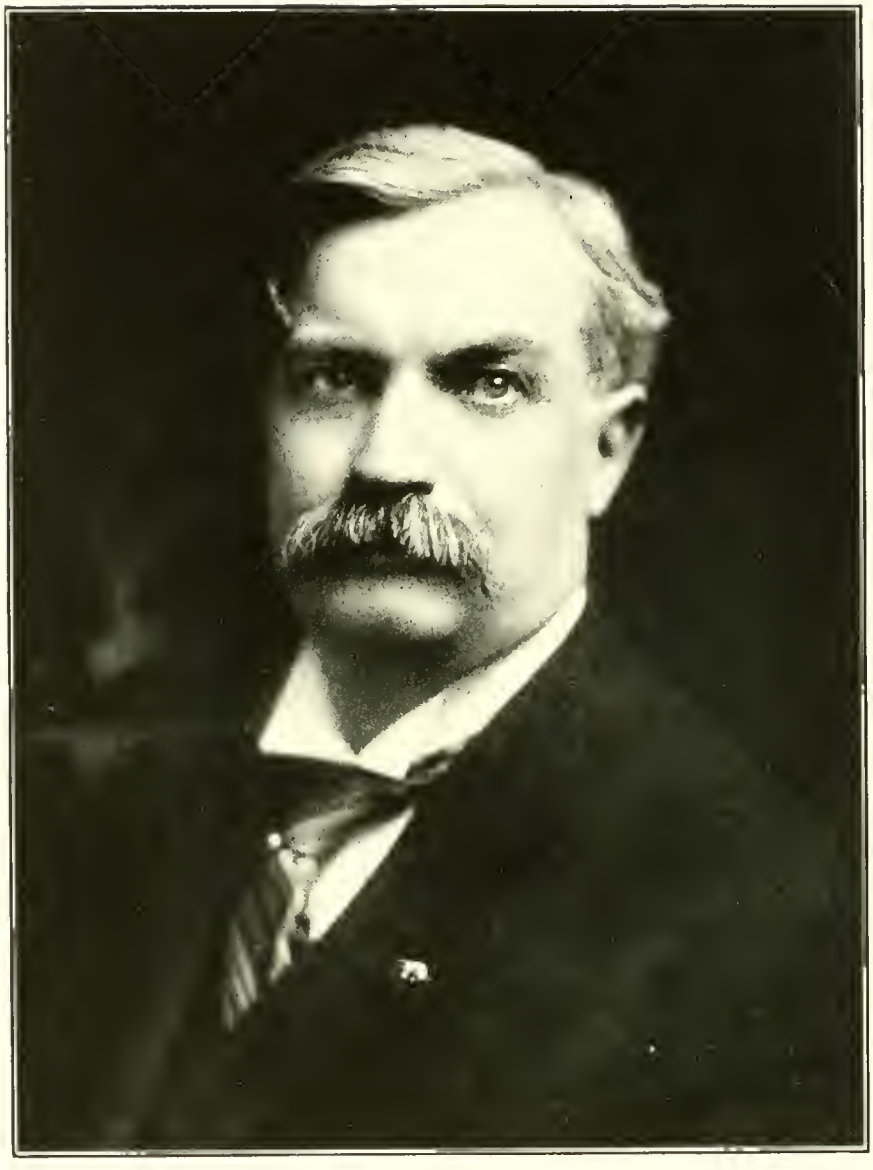
GOV. FRED M. WARNER



Presentation Address

By Fred M. Warner
Governor of Michigan

Mr. Kirchner: The statue being the gift of the people of the state of Michigan, it is proper that they should be heard from through their governor. I have the honor of presenting to you the Honorable Fred M. Warner, your chief executive.

Governor Warner: Mr. President, Mrs. Custer, Mr. Chairman, Veterans of the Custer Brigade, Ladies and Gentlemen:

In the discharge of my duties as chief executive of this great state, covering a period of five and one-half years, I have been called upon to represent the people of Michigan on many occasions commemorative of events of widely differing import and significance. On none of these occasions, I may truthfully say, have I experienced the emotions which possess me at this time.

It is a very great pleasure and a most distinguished honor to be permitted to greet and welcome, in the name of all the people of the Peninsular state, the chief executive of the nation, the gentle and much beloved widow of one of the greatest soldiers this country has ever known—a hero of heroes—and those brave men, now whitened for the reaper, who unhesitatingly followed their gallant leader into the very jaws of death on many a battlefield.

The loyal and hospitable citizens of Michigan welcome you all at this time, and beg to assure you

that they are fully mindful and keenly appreciative of the honor you have done them in gathering with them here to do honor to the memory of an intrepid soldier and to share with them the pleasure of dedicating this day a statue which shall have a sanctifying influence upon those now living and be a sacred inspiration to generations yet unborn.

Throughout the ages the people of all climes and of all countries have done honor to those of their number who, whether upon the field of battle or in the more quiet and peaceful walks of life, have rendered conspicuous service to their country and their fellowmen.

The names, the forms, and the services of these heroes have been preserved in enduring form so that those who come after them might be imbued with love of home and country and inspired to deeds of valor and of sacrifice.

It is well that we erect these statues and monuments and that the deeds of these heroes of ours are recounted in story and in song, for thus are our youth made to know that the people are not ungrateful, but rather hold in fond and lasting remembrance and reverence those who strive and sacrifice for the betterment of humanity and the preservation of the nation. Thus are our youth inspired to lives of rectitude and honorable service to mankind.

The distinguished statesmen and soldiers who have come here today to honor the gallant Custer will do full justice to his most enviable career as a citizen and a soldier, and to his services in behalf of his country and his fellowmen.

It remains for me merely to present this imposing statue as the gift of the grateful people of Michigan,

not to the City of Monroe, nor to the state or the nation.

The state of Michigan, Mr. Mayor, leaves this statue in this beautiful and historic city,—a city which has given much to the world in the shape of great men and noble women—knowing that its patriotic and grateful people will guard and keep it with zealous love and care throughout all the years that are to come, but it presents it to the world and all mankind in the confident hope and belief that whoever looks upon it, whether he comes from the homes of this city or from the uttermost habitations of the earth, will be ennobled and inspired with greater love of home, of country, and of humanity as he contemplates the unselfish and invaluable services of Major General George Armstrong Custer.

HON. JACOB MARTIN

Speech of Hon. Jacob Martin

MAYOR OF MONROE

MR. KIRCHNER: The statue having been committed to the care and keeping of the City of Monroe, I venture to call upon the mayor, Hon. Jacob Martin, to speak for her.

MAYOR MARTIN: Mr. President, Mrs. Custer, Your Excellency, gentlemen of the monument commission, and members of the legislature:

To you and each of you, who have made this moment in the history of Monroe possible, I desire most earnestly and gratefully, in behalf of the community I represent, to express to you my and their thanks for what you and each of you have done to bring about this gratifying result.

It has been nearly fifty years since the man whom this statue represents, then in the very earliest years of his manhood, but little more than a boy in fact, left the schoolroom at West Point and plunged into the midst of the stirring scenes of the civil war. What he did there, the honors he won, the bravery he showed, the victories he achieved, how the boy blossomed into the man, and the man into the hero, others, who were with him during those stirring times, and who fought with him and under him and who were a part of the scenes they described, have told you today.

It has been within a few days of thirty-four years since that brave and heroic life was snuffed

out on the hill-top in the wilderness near the Little Big Horn river, where the leader and four members of his family all went down in one swift death in a scene which must have struck terror to the bravest heart, when thousands of painted and hideous savages swept screaming over the little band and wiped them out of existence. But, when a month afterward the bodies were found, it was seen that he who had so bravely lived, knew how to die as bravely. Almost a generation of men has passed since that summer Sunday morning, and all of those who closed their eyes to the glad sun on that beautiful day have moulded into dust, but the deed they did, the lessons of their sacrifice, the lives they gave in their country's cause, have not died, but have grown brighter as the years have gone by, and this monument which marks the fame of their leader, is simply an expression of the feeling of this city, state and nation in whose behalf that sacrifice was made.

The little community which, during the years of his manhood,—and they were less than twenty, for he died before he was forty years of age—which was his home, has never failed in reverence and honor to his name; the state from which he went to the battlefield and which shared in the glory of his deeds, and the nation of whose history those deeds are an undying part, have joined on this occasion to render honor to the man whose fame grows brighter and brighter as the years go by. We, of his home town, are deeply grateful to you, gentlemen of the legislature, whose patriotic action has rendered possible this beautiful and everlasting specimen of the sculptor's art; to you, governor of the great state of Michigan, who, in fitting and well-

chosen words, has committed it to our keeping; and to you, honored president of a mighty and progressive nation, who have turned aside for a brief hour from the weighty cares of your station to honor this most beautiful little city of the land with your presence here today, to lay the wreath of the nation's tribute to the memory of our honored dead. To one and all our deepest thanks are due, and I hereby extend them.

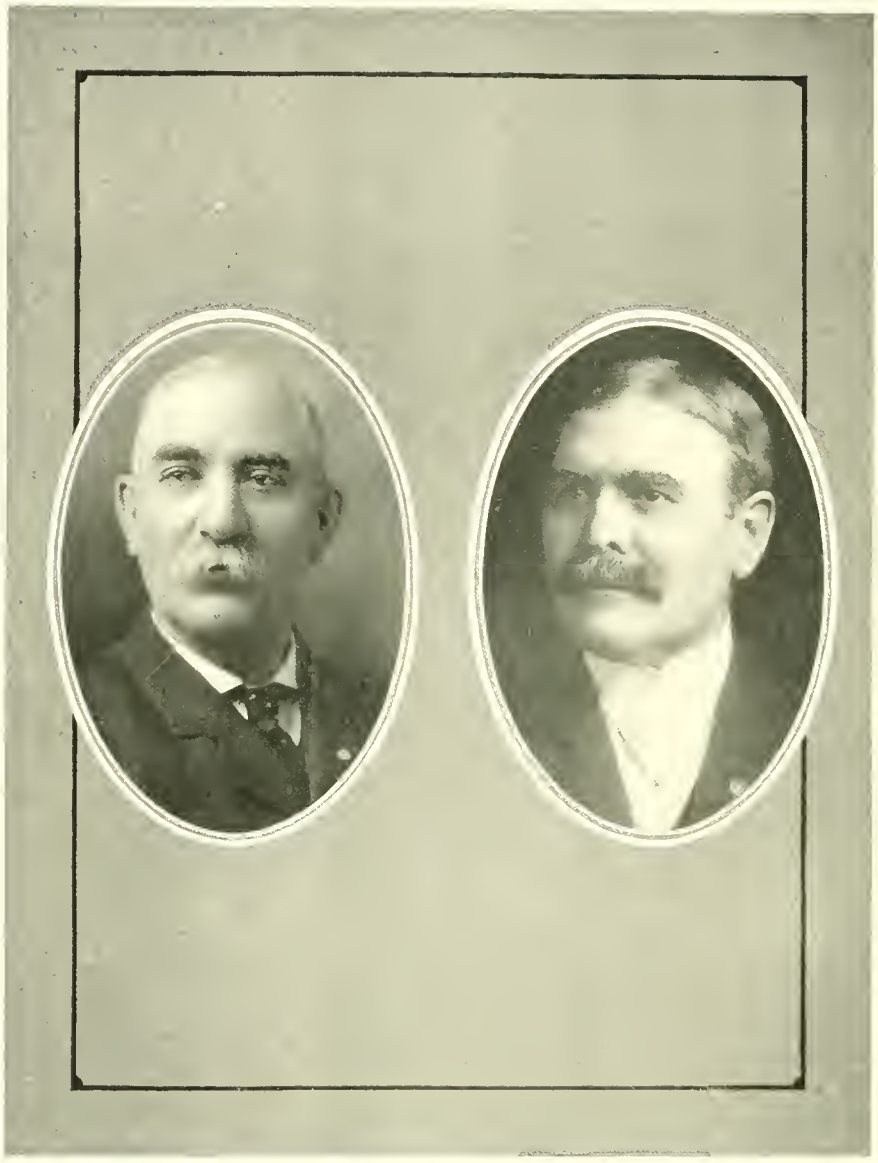
Gentlemen of the state and nation, the city of Monroe accepts your gift. Dedicated to the memory of our cherished dead by the act of the statesmen, the art of the sculptor, the song of the poet, the glowing words of the orator and the blessing of our president, it shall be to us a sacred and enduring trust, not for a day, a year, a generation, but for all time. Its loving care, its safe preservation, in its present beautiful condition, shall be the cheerful duty, well performed, of the city for all the years to come.

For the past we thank you, for the future we assure you that, your duty done, ours begins; and in it we shall not fail nor falter. And, sometime in the far distant years of the future, when we and our children and, perhaps, our children's children, shall have passed away from the scenes of earth, there shall gather about this spot a generation yet unborn and shall ask us and our successors of our trust, our descendants shall point to this beautiful statue, then still beautiful, still unimpaired, still standing a worthy and noble memento of the glorious dead, and shall say, "These, our forefathers, have well honored and well preserved this memorial of the imperishable memory of Custer."

(At this point a hush fell upon the vast throng, the band played "America," and the chorus of seventy-five young ladies sang the impressive chorus "The Old Brigade," a tribute arranged by the program committee in honor of the veterans of the Michigan cavalry brigade who stood with bowed heads, and distinguished by their red neckties. Many shed tears as the pathetic strains of the appropriate hymn recalled the days, long gone by, when they rode with Custer in Virginia.

The special train which was to bear President Taft and his party to Jackson, crept slowly through the crowd, and halted just west of the statue. Two lines of uniformed troops stood at a "present" as the President left the stand and boarded his train.)

MR. LEE
MR. HILL



MR WM O LEE

MR THOS W HILL

Decorating the Statue

While "The Old Brigade" was being sung, Mr. William O. Lee, President, and Mr. Thomas W. Hill, Secretary of the Michigan Cavalry Brigade Association, placed wreaths of laurel at the base of the statue.

MR. KIRCHNER: In the absence of Bishop Williams, the Reverend Charles O'Meara will now pronounce the benediction.

REV. CHAS. O'MEARA

The Benediction

By Reverend Charles O'Meara

May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever. Amen.

GEN. WILLIAM T. McGURRIN

MICH
MICH

The Parade

One of the most interesting features of the parade was the large number of veterans of the old brigade—most of them with white heads, and with faces furrowed with the seams of years—who appeared in it.

There were something like four hundred survivors of the four regiments, and they were most hospitably entertained by the good people of Monroe, who took them into their homes and cared for them like brothers. They were asigned places of honor in the march, and at the right of the statue during the ceremonies. Many of them had not met before since the war and, alas! for many of them this was the last meeting.

Following is the order for the parade, issued by Grand Marshal William T. McGurrin, Adjutant General of Michigan.

Orders No. 5.

1. The line of march of the parade incident to the unveiling of the Custer monument at Monroe, Michigan, June 4, 1910, will be from the railroad station, corner First and Kentucky avenues (Lake Shore Railway), and will proceed as follows:

Westerly on First street to Washington avenue, northerly on Washington avenue on Front, westerly on Front to Monroe, northerly across the Monroe street bridge to Elm avenue, westerly on Elm to east entrance of St. Mary's academy. After the exercises at St. Mary's academy, the procession moves

out of west entrance of academy, thence easterly on Elm avenue to North Macomb, southerly on North.

2. The elements of the parade will form as follows:

First battalion 26th infantry, U. S. A., with the 26th infantry band, Captain George E. Houle, commanding, on First street, facing southerly, right resting at Macomb street.

First and Third battalions and band, First infantry, M. N. G., Colonel John P. Kirk, commanding, upon the left of the 26th infantry battalion.

Monroe Camp of the Spanish War veterans, Captain William Luft, commanding, upon the left of the 3rd battalion, First infantry, M. N. G.

Custer's Cavalry Brigade association, William O. Lee, commanding, on First street, facing northerly, right resting near Kentucky avenue facing the railroad station.

Drill corps, National Veterans, Women's society of Toledo, on the left of the Custer's Cavalry Brigade association.

Posts of the G. A. R. upon the left of the Ladies' drill corps.

Other organizations and bands will be assigned positions upon their commanding officers or representatives reporting at the Grand Marshal's headquarters, Park hotel, Monroe.

As the last automobile following that of the President of the United States passes the Custer Cavalry Brigade, the brigade will follow it in column of fours, after it will follow the Ladies' drill corps, and the posts of the Grand Army of the Republic.

Upon reaching Macomb street, the President's escort will follow the route indicated in paragraph 1 of this order. The Custer Cavalry Brigade, the Ladies' drill corps and the posts of the Grand Army of the Republic will without halting turn southerly on the sidewalks at Macomb street to Second, and westerly on Second street to Monroe (the old Custer residence). At this point the Custer Cavalry Brigade association will mass upon the westerly side of the street in front of the Custer residence, the posts of the G. A. R. and the Ladies' drill corps massing upon their left, and there await the arrival of the presidential party. These organizations will, as far as possible, mass upon the sidewalk and grounds in rear, leaving the street clear.

3. After the President has reviewed the procession from the point opposite the Custer Cavalry Brigade association, and all automobiles have cleared the streets, the Custer Cavalry Brigade association will proceed to the space reserved for it upon the right of the speaker's stand, proceeding thereto via Second street, thence northerly on Washington street, followed by the posts of the G. A. R. and the Ladies' drill corps.

Upon arrival at the Custer statue, the following troops in the procession will take post as follows:

The First battalion 26th infantry, U. S. A., in mass on First street westerly from the statue, facing easterly, closing First street at that point.

The First battalion, 1st infantry, M. N. G., in mass northerly from the statue, facing southerly, closing Washington street at that point.

The Third battalion, 1st infantry, M. N. G., in

mass, easterly from the statue, facing westerly, closing First street at that point.

The Spanish war veterans will take post in the rear of the last-named battalion.

These positions will be maintained until the President arrives, and takes his place upon the speaker's stand, when the respective battalion commanders will exercise their best judgment in moving forward towards the statue, their flanks connecting, for the better accommodation of the spectators in their rear.

4. It is anticipated that the President will enter and leave the speaker's stand by way of Second and Washington streets, which latter street will be closed from Second street to the speaker's stand, from the general public, first by a detachment of Company "D", First infantry, M. N. G., and, secondly, by the President's escort, Troop "B" cavalry, M. N. G., the respective organization commanders being charged with the execution of this order.

5. Company "D," First infantry, M. N. G., is hereby detailed as a guard about the monument and speakers' stand, and will keep the spaces mentioned in paragraphs 3 and 4 of this order clear until the arrival of the troops which are directed to subsequently take charge of them.

6. All organizations will be in position as indicated in paragraph 2 promptly and not later than 8:30 A. M.

By order of the Grand Marshal,
BEN. H. DORCEY,
Captain, U. S. A., retired,
Adjutant General and Chief of Staff.

GEN. JAMES H. KIDD

George Armstrong Custer

A Historical Sketch

By J. H. Kidd

To write an appreciative and just account of the life and military services of General Custer is a task that would tax the resources of the most gifted writer or student. To do even scant justice to the theme is more than the author of this brief sketch may hope to accomplish. If, to the chance reader, his effort shall appear to be rather the plea of an advocate or the tribute of a friend, than the cold, dispassionate narrative of the historical annalist, it will be the fault of the point of view of the critic; and it will not be due to any want of historical accuracy on the part of the reviewer.

"Time at length sets all things even" and the sunlight of time, shining through the mists of the years, at last, we venture to hope, has cleared away the clouds of doubt, not to say distrust—some of them the manifestation of misinformation, some of malevolence—which for many years after his death obscured his fame.

Scarce forty years have passed—but a span, as time is measured on the dial-plate of history—and how plain those things appear that then were seen as "through a glass darkly." His figure, from this

time on, will stand out on the page of history, distinct as a piece of sculpture on the facade of a temple of art; flawless as the noble equestrian statue erected to symbolize his heroism and his virtues. The glamour of poetry, the winged word of the orator, the affluent thought and lucid diction of the historian, must all needs be at their best to adequately portray his genius as a soldier, his noble and lovable qualities as a man. In the language of an army officer, who is also a competent military critic*—too high minded and generous to be warped by prejudice or professional jealousy—General Custer as a cavalry officer was "in a class by himself."

No higher tribute can be paid. It fully justifies the opinion often expressed by the writer that George Armstrong Custer was the foremost cavalry officer of his time, not excepting any, federal or confederate. His fame is the common heritage of all patriots of the reunited republic, and deserves to be jealously treasured and perpetuated. His last battle, notwithstanding all that has been said about it, was the crowning glory of a life full of exploits; for it marked him as an officer who, at the end as he had been at the beginning, was wholly devoted to his duty; who never hesitated in his obedience to orders, even when such obedience led, as it did, to inevitable death.

He was a man, take him for all in all, "whose like we shall not see again," a veritable Chevalier Bayard, absolutely "without fear and without reproach;" like Sir Philip Sidney, a gentleman and a

*General T. F. Rodenbough, brigadier general, U. S. Army, retired, secretary military service institution, Governor's Island, N. Y., editor of the "Journal", formerly commanding Second U. S. cavalry, Reserve brigade, First Division, Cavalry corps, Army of the Potomac.

knight whose accomplishments were many and who was an ornament to the profession of arms of which he was a most consummate master.

In the final analysis, we may truthfully say of him that what Seydlitz was to Frederick the Great; what Prince Rupert was to Charles Stuart; what Joachim Murat was to Napoleon Bonaparte; what James E. B. Stuart was to Robert E. Lee; what Sheridan himself was to Ulysses S. Grant; such was Custer to Philip H. Sheridan; his right arm in battle, an ever present help in trouble. This his loyal friends have maintained always; this much his rivals now concede. Even in the regular army, the truth has prevailed. Rivalry has ceased to decry; envy no longer detracts. The impartial historian will place him in the temple of fame in the niche where he by right belongs, and in the acclaim no voices will join more heartily than those of the officers of the United States army. They will point with pride to his record, which will animate them to the full measure of their duty, as that of a soldier who was the type of all that an American cavalry officer should be or can be.

George Armstrong Custer was born December 5, 1839. He died June 25, 1876. His birthplace was New Rumley, Ohio, near the Pennsylvania line. The scene where his death befell was in far away Montana, by the banks of the "Greasy Grass," the Indian name for the Little Big Horn River. His ashes rest at West Point on the Hudson, the site of the military school where he was taught the art of war and trained in the profession of arms; and where so many officers were educated who brought distinction to the name of American soldier.

His origin was humble. The place where he first saw the light is so obscure as hardly to merit mention on the map. His father was a blacksmith who left the shop in Pennsylvania to become a small farmer in Ohio, and brought his forge with him. His ancestry, on his father's side, is traced back to Maryland, and to colonial times, but there is good reason to take with a grain of salt the statement of one of his biographers that his great grandfather was an officer of King George the Third's Hessian mercenaries. He may have been of German descent, but the strain of martial blood that ran in the veins of himself and his brother "Tom," is suggestive of the fiery Celt or the mercurial Frank rather than of the phlegmatic Teuton.

His mother was his father's second wife and a widow when she married him. General Custer was the eldest of the children born to the union of Emmanuel Custer and the widow Kirkpatrick. These parents, though poor, came of sturdy and self-reliant stock; were well-principled and fond of their children. His education was the best that the schools of the section afforded. That he made the best use of his opportunities is quite certain. His alertness of mind and vigor of body enabled him to be easily a leader among the boys of his age, both in his studies and in athletics. With a wiry frame, a strong constitution, and perfect health, he was a natural leader of boys as in after years he became a leader of men. He was born to leadership.

From the time he was ten years of age until he was sixteen Custer lived alternately in New Rumley and in Monroe, Michigan. His parents remained on the old farm, but a half-sister, who had married a

man named Reed from Monroe went there to live and took her young brother with her. The associations and educational advantages of that historical old town were of great benefit to him. He worked on his father's farm summers, attended school in Monroe winters, and at the last, did what many other noted men have done, earned his first money by teaching school.

Armstrong Custer was not a plodding student, but quick to learn. His brother, Nevin, relates that he used to lie in the furrow and study during the noon hour when others were resting. There is no doubt that he was ambitious and dreamed dreams, as other bright boys have done. His father was a militia officer, and the story of the martial exploits of the officers of the United States army in Mexico—of Palo Alto, of Cerro Gordo and Chapultepec—inflamed the imagination of the youthful student and filled him with the desire to emulate their heroic deeds. He seems to have had an inspiration, sort of a prophetic intuition, that led him to make application for a cadetship at West Point. That was in 1856, when he was but sixteen years old. It was the year that the republican party presented its first ticket—Fremont and Dayton—for president and vice president. John A. Bingham had been chosen to congress as a republican in 1854, from the district in which New Rumley was situated. He was re-elected in 1856. It was to him that young Custer applied for an appointment. The elder Custer was a democrat, a "Jacksonian" democrat, and remained such all his life. His sons were trained in that political faith. So far as he had anything to do with politics, there is

reason to believe that Armstrong Custer was true to the political principles of his father, Emmanuel Custer. Indeed, the old gentleman averred with much emphasis when asked if the general was not a democrat—

"Of course he was a democrat. My boys were all democrats. I would not raise any other kind."

It is not strange, therefore, that the father gave the son no encouragement when he proposed to ask Congressman Bingham for a cadetship. He did not believe that a republican congressman would thus favor the son of a democrat of the Emmanuel Custer stripe.

But the future major general of division was not to be deterred by that or any other trifling obstacles from making the effort. With the faith in himself which he ever afterwards displayed, in May, 1856, he wrote to Mr. Bingham a most frank and manly letter asking him for the appointment, expressing the belief that he could meet the requirements and offering to furnish certificates of good moral character. But another had the call that year, and the next year he went to Mr. Bingham in person and made an impression so favorable upon the mind of the congressman that he won his heart and confidence at once, and received the appointment.

In this way it came about that in June, 1857, Custer entered the West Point Military academy, the protege of Hon. John A. Bingham, afterwards minister to Japan, who was thus instrumental in starting on his military course one of the real heroes of the nation.

The career of Cadet Custer in West Point was

not a remarkable one. In point of scholarship he just managed to keep within the breastworks. Like Ulysses S. Grant, he did not stand anywhere near the head of his class. Like Grant, he was a splendid horseman and well liked. He said himself that in a class numbering thirty-five members, who were graduated, he was thirty-fourth. This was from no lack of ability, for he mastered his studies with the greatest ease, but because he was so full of exuberant animal spirits, of fun and frolic, that he was continually getting demerit marks for some venial infraction of the rules of conduct and discipline. He was a favorite and won the hearts of all by his good nature, his manliness and high sense of honor; all of which, however, did not keep him out of mischief; or prevent his paying the penalty for derelictions, in loss of class standing and the privileges that fell to "prize" cadets.

Custer's notification of his appointment came from Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War in Buchanan's cabinet; the commandant of the academy was John F. Reynolds, afterwards major general of volunteers and killed at Gettysburg. One of his instructors was Fitzhugh Lee. In the corps of cadets were many young men of the south, two of whom, Thomas L. Rosser, of Virginia, and P. M. B. Young, of Georgia, became major generals of confederate cavalry; with whom Custer crossed swords on many battle fields.

When the time came for the class to be graduated, June, 1861, and the cadets assigned to the various branches of the military service, war had broken out between the states, a southern confederacy had been formed, and two armies—one

for the Union, the other against it—were assembling in Virginia to submit the question of union or disunion to the arbitrament of arms. The southerners went home to their several states and cast in their lots with the confederacy. The northern boys eagerly sought service in the armies of the United States to fight for the union under the stars and stripes. Among these last, none were more patriotic and enthusiastic than was young Custer. But his career came near being nipped in the bud, through one of those characteristic breaches of discipline just on the eve of graduation. He was an officer of the guard, when the order from Washington designating the cadets as officers of the army was hourly expected. The way in which the impulses of the boy overcame the official obligation of the officer of the guard, during his tour of duty in that position, is best described in his own language:

"Just at dark I heard a commotion near the guard tents. Hastening to the scene, I found two cadets engaged in a dispute which threatened to result in blows. A group of cadets had formed about the two bellicose disputants. I had hardly time to take in the situation, when the two disputants began belaboring each other with their fists. Some of their more prudent friends rushed in and sought to separate the two antagonists. My duty was plain. I should have arrested the combatants and sent them to the guardhouse for violating the peace and regulations of the academy. But the instincts of the boy prevailed over the obligations of the officer. I pushed my way through the line of cadets, dashed back those who were interfering with the struggle

and called out: 'Stand back, boys, let's have a fair fight.'"

The result of this breach of duty was that Cadet Custer was sent to his tent in arrest, charges were preferred, and sent on to Washington. A court martial was convened to try him on the charges and, when his classmates went to Washington for assignment as officers of the army, he was left behind in arrest, awaiting the outcome of the court martial's findings, which were promptly forwarded to the war department.

But when his classmates arrived in Washington, they interceded for him. The government was in sore need of educated officers, and a telegraphic order was sent for his release and directing him to report to the war department, forthwith, for assignment to duty.

It will be necessary, owing to the limitations of space, to pass rapidly over the life of Custer as a subaltern in the regular army. He arrived in Washington July 20, 1861, and reporting to General Scott, was ordered to join his troop of the Second United States cavalry on duty with General McDowell's army, at the front. General Scott also entrusted him with important despatches to General McDowell —a most auspicious beginning for a youngster just out of West Point. With much difficulty he succeeded in reaching the front and delivered the despatches. He joined and with the rank of second lieutenant was engaged with his troop at Bull Run, the first battle of the war. That was July 21, just one day after his arrival in Washington. Thus, there was no interval between the time of

reporting for duty and the beginning of his active service in the field; and that service was practically continuous not only till the surrender at Appomattox, but until the day of his death, June 25, 1876—barely fifteen years almost to a day—yet how full of heroism and achievement was that short period in an American army officer's life.

Custer was at that time but little more than twenty-one years of age. There was an indefinable something about his personality that attracted the attention of his superiors in years and rank. His courage was conspicuous, and from the first, opportunity came his way, and the phrase, "Custer's luck" was often on his own lips; but the secret of his phenomenal rise as a cavalry officer must be sought elsewhere than in mere luck. He was resolute, alert, and ambitious. He possessed a certain prescience or intuition which pointed out the way and taught him what to do and when to do it. Whatever was given him to do, whether in high or low station, he did with all his might. His motto seemed to be, "Make myself as useful as possible in the performance of every duty." In this he succeeded so well that his superiors found they could not well get along without him.

Soon after the battle of Bull Run, Custer received a detail as aide-de-camp to General Philip Kearny, one of the ablest and most picturesque officers of the civil war. Straightway, he was designated as assistant adjutant general of the brigade. He made good, as he never failed to do, won the confidence of his chief, and remained on Kearny's staff until the war department ruled that regular army officers

could no longer be permitted to serve on the staffs of generals of volunteers.

In the spring of 1862, Custer was transferred from the Second to the Fifth United States cavalry without increased rank. In the Peninsular campaign he was selected as an engineer officer at the headquarters of General W. F. ("Baldy") Smith. He was mentioned for gallantry in a report of General W. S. Hancock; was especially commended for zealous and brave conduct by General Barnard, chief engineer of the Army of the Potomac; and finally, a characteristic exploit brought him to the favorable notice of General George B. McClellan who, as a reward, appointed him on his staff with the rank of captain. Thus, in less than a year from graduation, he found himself a trusted member of the staff of the commander-in-chief of the army. His commission as captain was signed by President Lincoln and forwarded to him by Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton. It was dated June 5, 1862. He served in this capacity during the seven days battles; through the Antietam campaign and until the retirement of "Little Mac" from the command; signalizing his service by frequent deeds of daring that brought him more and more into favorable attention. And Custer was then a boy of twenty-two. During the winter of 1862-63 he was with his chief in retirement; assisting the latter in the work of making his voluminous report of the operations of the army while under his command. In the spring of 1863 he was ordered back to his regiment, the Fifth Cavalry, then on duty with Burnside near Falmouth. Captain Custer was once more Lieutenant Custer,

though the former title stuck to him and he was spoken of always as "Captain Custer."

During that year it became known that two regiments of cavalry, the Sixth and Seventh, were to be raised in Michigan and Captain Custer applied to Governor Blair for the colonelcy of one of them. His application was refused and he had to be content with his lower rank. He did not remain long with his regiment, for he was detailed successively as aide-de-camp on the staff of General Buford, chief of the first cavalry division, and of General Pleasonton, chief of cavalry. With the latter, as with Kearny and McClellan, he was a great favorite. He had tact, energy, intuition, the ability to grasp the elusive opportunity, courage of the highest type and, in every engagement, he was in the very forefront. In the battle of Aldie, though but a lieutenant, he rode side by side with Colonel Kilpatrick, commander of a brigade, and Colonel Douty, of the First Maine cavalry, in leading a successful charge against Stuart's confederate troopers. Douty was killed and Kilpatrick wounded. Custer came out without a scratch. It may be surmised that Pleasonton made a note of the gallant conduct of his young aide and, as a matter of fact, in that very month, Custer, upon Pleasonton's recommendation, was promoted from lieutenant in the Fifth cavalry to brigadier general of volunteers. His commission was dated June 29, 1863. He was assigned to command the Second brigade, Third division of the cavalry corps. Kilpatrick was at the same time made general of division. Elon J. Farnsworth, of the Eighth Illinois cavalry,

received his star on the same day and was placed in command of the First brigade.

The Michigan cavalry brigade (Second brigade, Third division) consisted of four regiments—the First, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh. The First went out in 1861 under Colonel T. F. Brodhead, a veteran of the Mexican war, who was killed in the second battle of Bull Run. The Fifth, Sixth and Seventh were organized a year later and had been serving in the department of Washington. The brigade only recently had been organized and was on duty in Fairfax county, Virginia, when Hooker began his march into Maryland to head off the army of Northern Virginia under Lee, which had begun an invasion of the north similar to that which ended so disastrously to him and his army at the battle of Antietam in 1862. The Michigan regiments left Fairfax courthouse and, crossing the Potomac river at Edwards ferry, marched via Poolesville, Frederick, and Emmittsburg to Gettysburg, arriving in that town—destined so soon to give its name to one of the greatest battles of history—on Sunday, June 28, 1863. Thence they were concentrated at Hanover, a few miles southeast of Gettysburg, as a part of the force sent under Kilpatrick to intercept the march of Stuart's cavalry which was groping its way, three brigades strong, in search of Lee's army, from which it had been separated since the beginning of the campaign. Coming successively into the little village of Hanover, under the command of their respective colonels, they were dismounted to fight on foot, and deploying into line, facing the southeast, advanced through some

wheat fields towards the heights whereon were posted Stuart's brigades under Hampton, Chambliss and Fitzhugh Lee. The Michigan men, with the exception of the First cavalry, never had been under fire. It was their first battle. Suddenly there appeared upon the scene a picturesque figure whom none of them ever had seen. This was the young brigadier general just twenty-three years and six months old, who had worn his star but two days. He was a stranger to them; they were strangers to him.

Instantly order began to come out of the disorder that had prevailed for several hours. He gave his orders in clear, resonant tones, at once resolute and reassuring. At first he was thought to be a staff officer conveying the commands of his chief, but in a very short time it became apparent that he himself was the commander. It will not be amiss to give here a pen sketch of him as he appeared to an officer just three months his junior in years who happened to be in command of a troop upon the very part of the line where he was.*

"Looking at him closely this is what I saw: An officer superbly mounted who sat his charger as if 'to the manor born.' Tall, lithe, active, muscular, straight as an Indian and as quick in his movements, he had the fair complexion of a school girl. He was uniformed in a suit of black velvet, elaborately trimmed with gold lace which ran down the outer seams of his trousers and almost covered the sleeves of his cavalry jacket. The wide collar of a blue navy shirt with embroidered stars at the points, was turned over the collar of his velvet jacket, and a necktie of bright crimson was

*Personal recollections of a Cavalryman, by J. H. Kidd.

tied in a graceful knot at the throat, the long ends falling carelessly in front. The double rows of brass buttons on his breast were arranged in groups of twos, indicating the rank of brigadier general. A soft black hat with wide brim adorned with a gilt cord, and a rosette encircling a silver star, was worn turned down on one side, giving him a rakish air. His golden hair fell in graceful luxuriance nearly or quite to his shoulders and his upper lip was garnished with a blonde mustache. A sword and belt, gilt spurs and top boots completed his unique outfit.

"A keen eye would have been slow to detect in that rider with the flowing locks and bright necktie, in his dress of velvet and gold, the master spirit that he proved to be. That garb, fantastic as at first sight it appeared, was to be the distinguishing mark that, like the white plume of Henry of Navarre, was to show us where in the thickest of the fight we were to seek our leader—for where danger was, where swords were to cross, where Greek met Greek, there was he always. Brave, but not reckless; self-confident, yet modest; ambitious but regulating his conduct at all times by a high code of honor and duty; eager for laurels, but scorning to wear them unworthily; ready and willing to act, but regardful of human life; quick in emergencies, cool and self-poised, his courage was of the highest moral and physical type, his perceptions were intuitions. Showy, like Murat, fiery like Kearny, yet calm and self reliant like Sheridan, he was the most brilliant and resourceful cavalry officer of his time. Such a man had appeared upon the scene and from that day the Michigan cavalrymen swore by Custer and would follow him to the death."

"George Armstrong Custer was undeniably the most picturesque figure of the civil war. Yet his ability and services were hardly justly appraised by the American people. It is doubtful if more than one of his superior officers—if we except Kearny, McClellan and Pleasonton, who knew him only as a subaltern—estimated him at his true value. Sheridan knew him for what he was. So did the Michigan cavalry brigade and the Third cavalry division. Except by these he was regarded as a brave and dashing but reckless officer who needed a steady hand to guide him. Among regular army officers he cannot be said to have been a favorite. The rapidity of his rise to the zenith of his fame and unexampled success, when so many of the youngsters of his years were moving in the comparative obscurity of their own orbits, irritated them. Stars of the first magnitude did not appear often in the galaxy of heroes. Custer was one of the few."

"The popular idea of Custer is a misconception. He was not a reckless commander. He was not regardless of human life. No man could have been more careful of the lives and comfort of his men. His heart was as tender as that of a woman. He was kind to his subordinates, tolerant of their weaknesses, ever ready to help and encourage them. He was as brave as a lion, fought as few men fought, but from no love of fighting. That was his business, and he knew that in that way alone peace could be conquered. He was brave, alert, untiring, a hero in battle, relentless in the pursuit of a beaten enemy, stubborn and full of resources in a retreat. His death at the battle of the Little Big Horn crowned his career with a tragic interest that will not wane

while history or tradition endure. Hundreds of brave men shed tears when they heard of it—men who had served under and learned to love him in the trying times of the civil war."

The facts of that battle are now pretty well known and analysis of them by an unprejudiced mind will completely exonerate him from any blame whatever for that great catastrophe.

From Hanover he led his brigade towards Gettysburg and the night of July 2, after dark, had a sharp encounter with Hampton's cavalry at Hunterstown, five miles northeast of Gettysburg. Here, with characteristic audacity, he ordered a mounted charge of the advance guard—two troops of the Sixth Michigan cavalry under Captain H. E. Thompson—against the enemy dismounted and posted behind rail fences and led the charge in person.

Hanover and Hunterstown were but the prelude to the great cavalry fight on the Rummel farm on the right flank at Gettysburg, Friday, July 3, 1863, the third day of the battle. It was that battle that gave great renown to the name of Custer as a general of brigade. It was that cavalry fight that saved Meade's right flank from being turned at the moment when Pickett made his famous assault upon the center on Cemetery ridge. It was that fight that brought fame to the Michigan brigade, all due to his matchless leadership and to its own prowess. It was that fight which but five days after the date of his commission, proved the wisdom of Custer's promotion from captain to brigadier general. It was that fight in which he led four Michigan regiments and Pennington's battery "M," Second U. S. artillery, that started him on his career

of success—a success that was unbroken till the sun of the confederacy went down at Appomattox.

All the world knows about it now. The story has been told by many pens. But for many years after the war it was scarcely heard of. In the language of General Charles King: "Stuart's dash far out on the right flank would have rung the world over but for the Michigan men. It was Custer and the Wolverines who flew like bulldogs straight at the throat of the foe; who blocked his headlong charge; who pinned him to the ground while like wolves their comrade troops rushed upon his flank."*

Custer commanded the Michigan brigade from June 30, 1863 until September 26, 1864—a period of just one year, two months, and twenty-six days. From that time till the close of the war he commanded the Third cavalry division. His old brigade did not go with him but remained in the First division under Generals Merritt and Devin. There were no Michigan troops in the Third division during the time that Custer commanded it, which was from September 26, 1864, until the war closed.

The limits of this sketch will permit but a cursory review of Custer's career after Gettysburg. It would take more than a volume to tell the story in its entirety. He led his brigade from the Rummel fields through the passes of the South Mountains in pursuit of Lee's retreating army, harassing the enemy every mile of the way; he fought a midnight fight at Monterey; met the confederate cavalry at Smithburg, at Hagerstown, at Boonesborough, at Williamsport, at Falling Waters, where he fought the last battle on northern soil in that campaign. He was

*Personal recollections of a Cavalryman, by J. H. Kidd.

constant in the pursuit of the enemy after crossing the Potomac river back into Virginia. He had sharp engagements at Amissville, at Newby's Cross-roads, at Raccoon, and Somerville fords, and elsewhere. He was prominent and his brigade distinguished itself greatly in all these engagements; especially at Brandy Station, October 11, where all the fighting was done on horseback; and at Buckland Mills, October 19, where Kilpatrick's division was saved from destruction by Custer's prudence, tactical skill and pluck, after Kilpatrick's rashness had led it into a trap set by Stuart and Fitzhugh Lee. Then he went into winter quarters at Stevensburg, in Culpeper county, Virginia. During all this period he received but one wound and that a slight one, though he had several horses shot under him.

While at Stevensburg, in February, 1864, he obtained a leave of absence and going home to Monroe, Michigan, was married to Miss Elizabeth B. Bacon, daughter of Judge Bacon of that place, for whom he had a romantic attachment, dating from his boyhood school days. The marriage proved a happy one. His bride returned to Stevensburg with him and, ever after, when the exigencies of the service would permit, was at his side. During all the years since his death she has devoted herself to keeping his memory green. During his life their home life was ideal.

In February, 1864, Kilpatrick started on a bold but ill-fated expedition projected for the capture of Richmond and the release of the union prisoners confined there. Custer was taken away from his brigade and entrusted with the responsibility of a

feint around Lee's left to distract attention while Kilpatrick passed around his right. Custer's part of the plan was most successfully accomplished, showing how well he could meet every military requirement, with or without his Michigan men.

After the return from the Kilpatrick raid Custer and his brigade were transferred from the Third to the First division, reporting in his new sphere of duty in April.

In Grant's great campaign of 1864—from the Wilderness, May 6, to Cold Harbor, June 1—he was the bright, particular star in that constellation of heroes who rode with Sheridan. His intrepid spirit never flagged and, "where'er the bravest dared to be" the sabers of his Michigan cavalry were seen. On the left flank in the Wilderness, he met and vanquished Rosser, the brave southern cavalryman, so completely that his dead and wounded were left in our hands on the field; thus warding off the expected flanking attack so much dreaded by Meade, Grant and Hancock. May 7, he aided Gregg in defeating those brave knights of the southern cause, Stuart and Fitzhugh Lee.

He led the advance on Sheridan's great raid into the enemy's country, when ten thousand horse cut loose from the army of the Potomac and, in a column thirteen miles long, sought out Stuart and challenged him to a fight to the finish upon his native heath. Detached from the main column Custer captured Beaver Dam Station, recaptured several hundred union prisoners who were being rushed to Richmond, and destroyed an immense quantity of Lee's military stores, including all his medical supplies.

On the morning of May 11, at Yellow Tavern, six miles north of Richmond, at the critical moment in the battle, Custer was entrusted with the important duty of making a mounted charge against the enemy strongly posted on a commanding ridge flanked by artillery. He penetrated the enemy's line with the First and Seventh Michigan mounted and supported by the Fifth and Sixth on foot; captured one of his batteries and, in the melee that resulted, the confederate leader, Stuart, the prince of southern cavaliers, was killed and his entire body of cavalry put to rout. The next day, May 12, Custer was selected by Sheridan to open the way across the Chickahominy, at the Meadow Bridges, the only gateway to safety from the somewhat critical position in which he found himself. The bridge had been destroyed and, Fitzhugh Lee, who succeeded Stuart, had taken up and fortified a naturally strong position on the opposite shore. Passing the Fifth and Sixth Michigan across on the ties of a railroad bridge, Custer gained a foothold, drove Lee's skirmishers into their breastworks, and rebuilt the bridge, so that Sheridan passed his entire force across it in safety, after Gregg had repulsed a menacing attack in rear, led by Jefferson Davis in person.

On the return from the neighborhood around Richmond to the army at Chesterfield Station, which occupied the time until May 26, Custer was constantly called upon to perform special and important service, showing that the confidence which he had inspired in his chief was absolute. Stopping, on one of these side expeditions, at a house where were many ladies of southern proclivities, he wrote

and entrusted to the care of one of them a chivalrous message to his friend, P. M. B. Young, a classmate in West Point. Young had made a prophecy at the mess table one day before they left the academy that each would be colonel of a cavalry regiment from his state—Custer from Michigan, Young from Georgia—and that they would meet in battle. The prophecy had been more than fulfilled. Each had command of a brigade and they had met more than once in battle. Custer told Young he wished that he would stay in one place long enough to be found; that he had been hot on his trail for many days but could not overtake him and bring him to a fight. The lady promised to deliver the letter and did so. After the war, the two cavalry officers met and were good friends, as before.

May 27, Custer again led the advance of the army, in the movement across the Pamunkey into the country between that river and the Chickahominy. He forced the crossing at Hanovertown with the First Michigan, then advanced toward Hanover Courthouse, the Sixth Michigan leading. Soon, Gordon's brigade of North Carolinians under Barringer, Gordon having been killed, was encountered and a hard fight ensued. Putting the First and Sixth Michigan into action dismounted, he took the Fifth and Seventh and, leading them in person around the flank of the force confronting the other regiments put it to rout, the pursuit taking him to Crump's Creek, several miles away. When he went into this charge, he set his band playing Yankee Doodle, which had the effect to put an end for the occasion to the music of the confederate band which had been playing Bonnie Blue Flag, in rear of their line.

The next day at Haw's Shop occurred the hardest and most bloody cavalry fight of the entire war, numbers engaged considered. Gregg, with the Second division of but two brigades had been sent out to uncover the movements of Lee's army. He had advanced but a short distance beyond Haw's Shop when he ran into the entire confederate cavalry force under Wade Hampton, who had succeeded Stuart. Gregg was getting the worst of it and called for help. The Michigan brigade was ordered to the front as a reinforcement. Coming into the engagement from the rear and about opposite to Gregg's center, Custer formed the brigade, dismounted in double ranks and, riding ahead of the line, accompanied by a single aide, waved his hat over his head and called for three cheers. The cheers were given and he led his men in a charge into the woods where Butler's South Carolinians were just coming into action on the other side. Then it was face to face, and eye to eye. The effect of Custer's splendid courage was to inspire his Wolverines to more than their wonted bravery. In a few minutes the men from the Palmetto state were in headlong flight, leaving their dead and wounded. About one hundred officers and men were killed and wounded in the Michigan brigade and it all befell within a very few minutes after the charge into the woods. The ground was covered with confederate dead. The trees were riddled with bullets. The leaden hail, hitting the bushes and bark of the trees sounded like crackling glass. The sound of the firing was heard distinctly far to the rear, where Grant, Meade and Sheridan anxiously were awaiting the event. Custer with

his usual luck, escaped without a wound. His aide was shot in two places. He there made a record for personal daring and magnetic leadership unsurpassed on either side during the civil war. Ah, but he was a gallant and inspiring figure, dressed as at Hanover, his blonde curls flying, his red necktie flaming, riding his horse in front of his men on foot—between them and the enemy who, with undaunted front, were firing as fast as they could load and daring him to come on. No more brave deed ever was done. Haw's Shop stamped Custer—and not Custer only but the men who followed him into that sanguinary hell of fire, as he dashed into the thickest of it—as "the bravest of the brave." He saved Gregg's division. He won the battle. He vanquished the very flower of the southern cavaliers. No more, after Haw's Shop, were heard those cruel and unjust words. "Who ever saw a dead cavalryman?"

At Haw's Shop, as at Gettysburg, Custer and his brigade came opportunely to the relief of Gregg's splendid division. Upon those two battles alone, if there had been no other, their fame rests as secure as that of Cardigan and the light brigade for their charge at Balaklava. Here is a theme as noble as that which inspired the British bard, and soon or late, some American Tennyson, will sing of Custer and the Michigan brigade at Rummel's farm or at Haw's Shop, in verse as heroic as that of the English poet in "The Charge of the Light Brigade."

Haw's Shop led up to Cold Harbor. Indeed, it was the beginning of that bloody struggle which Grant in his memoirs seems to apologize for as one that ought never to have been fought. The

afternoon of May 31, the Michigan and Reserve brigades—Custer and Merritt—drove the confederate cavalry out of Cold Harbor and took possession of the place. The federal infantry was ten miles away. The confederate infantry was concentrating in front of the federal cavalry and Sheridan, believing that he could not hold the position with cavalry alone, fell back. Grant, realizing the strategic importance of the position, directed Sheridan to return and hold it at all hazards until the infantry could come up. Then followed one of the most remarkable features of that unexampled campaign. From midnight May 31 until noon June 1, a thin line of dismounted cavalry, behind a slight barrier of rails, with artillery in action close behind them, held off the confederate infantry in strong force. Then the Sixth corps came up and relieved them and the battle of Cold Harbor had begun. At reveille, that morning, the bugles of the enemy sounded close in front, the commands of the officers were heard distinctly. It seemed that at any moment they would charge right over that attenuated line. But the bold front of the cavalry completely deceived them. Custer was as usual the most conspicuous figure. Riding along the line, from right to left and from left to right again, he spoke encouraging words to his officers and men lying behind those piles of rails; inspiring them by his example and making them think they were invincible. Custer always was on horseback. He never was seen on foot in battle, even when every other officer and man in his command was dismounted. And he rode close to the very front line, fearless and resolute. When advancing against an enemy,

he was with the skirmishers; on the retreat, he rode with the rear guard. Those who had occasion to seek him out in battle, found him in the place nearest the enemy. Such was he at Gettysburg, at Brandy Station, at Buckland Mills, in the Wilderness, at Haw's Shop, and at Cold Harbor. By this time, the reason for his choosing so singular a uniform was seen. It individualized him. Wherever seen, it was recognized. There was but one Custer, and by his unique appearance and heroic bearing he was readily distinguished from all others.

Then came Trevilian Station, that battle about which so much has been written and so little of the truth is really known, Grant had determined, after the terrible carnage in and around Cold Harbor, to make another movement by the left flank and shift the position of his entire army from the Pamunkey to the James. Sheridan was directed to take two divisions of his cavalry and proceed leisurely to Charlottesville on the Virginia Central Railroad. The object of this raid was two fold: To draw away the confederate cavalry while the transfer was being made and to effect a junction with Hunter, who with a considerable force of infantry was operating between Charlottesville and Lynchburg. If successful in this, they were jointly to advance and capture Lynchburg. Sheridan's march began with the First and Second divisions (Torbert and Gregg) by crossing the Pamunkey at Newcastle ferry June 7, and going thence by easy stages along the north bank of the North Anna river, reaching Carpenter's ford the night of June 10. Then he crossed and camped on the road leading past Clayton's store to Trevilian Station.

Trevilian is a station on the railroad between Louisa Courthouse and Gordonsville.

As soon as Sheridan's movement was known, Hampton with two divisions of cavalry (his own and Fitzhugh Lee's), five brigades, moved parallel with Sheridan's march and on the south side of the river. He reached Trevilian Station the same night that Sheridan camped at Clayton's store. Breckinridge's corps of infantry started at the same time as Hampton, and succeeded in reaching Gordonsville. Thus Sheridan had in his front, between him and Hunter, to meet his two divisions of cavalry, two divisions of cavalry and a corps of infantry. Moreover, Hunter instead of seeking to effect a junction, finding that he was intercepted, was marching the other way. It will be seen that, with no prospect of help from Hunter, Sheridan was easily "an unequal match for Achilles."

But Hampton made one fatal blunder. On the night of June 10 his command was separated. He was in Trevilian Station with three brigades of cavalry. Fitzhugh Lee was at Louisa courthouse seven miles away with two brigades. Breckinridge was at or near Gordonsville. Hampton planned to advance from Trevilian Station to Clayton's store on the morning of June 11 and attack Sheridan. Fitzhugh Lee was to march by another road and unite with Hampton. Sheridan advanced from Clayton's store toward Trevilian Station to meet Hampton. The two lines met midway and a fierce battle resulted.

Custer with the Michigan brigade had been in camp and picketing toward Louisa Courthouse. He was ordered to take a country road and come

into the station from a direction different from that taken by Torbert with the rest of the First division and one brigade of Gregg's division. The other brigade of the Second division was sent out toward Louisa Courthouse and intercepted Fitzhugh Lee, preventing his junction with Hampton. Custer also got between Lee and Hampton, around the latter's right flank into his rear, and captured a large number of his led horses and some of his trains, the capture being made by a charge of the Fifth Michigan cavalry.

In the meantime, the fight was raging between Hampton and Torbert. Fitzhugh Lee was making a detour by still another road leading to the station. All the roads converged to that one point.

When Hampton heard the tumult in his rear, caused by the Fifth Michigan, he recalled Rosser's brigade, which had been posted to protect his left flank, and the latter came into action in time to cut off the Fifth Michigan. The Sixth Michigan charged and drove away a portion of Young's brigade of Hampton's division, which interposed between Custer and the Fifth Michigan after the latter's charge. The First and Seventh Michigan, which had been out on the road to Louisa Courthouse, returned and Custer proceeded toward Trevilian, arriving just in time to encounter Rosser on his front and right flank and Fitzhugh Lee coming in on the road from Louisa Courthouse on his left flank; while still another force, the identity of which is not certain, attacked his rear. He was surrounded. His line for a time was in the form of a circle. Then it was that he was seen at his best. One gun of Pennington's battery was charged

by Fitzhugh Lee and was taken. Custer made a counter charge and retook it. The fighting was hand to hand. He was everywhere present. First in front and then in rear, again on either flank. His color bearer was shot and to prevent the colors falling into the hands of the enemy he tore them from the staff and carried them to a place of safety. He was now in rear of Young's and Butler's brigades and Torbert was driving them back upon him. But Rosser being in his front, Fitzhugh Lee on his left flank and rear, the problem was to hold them off until Torbert could break through to his aid. The latter was finally successful in doing this. The two divisions united at last. Hampton was driven to the west, Fitzhugh Lee to the east, and they failed in their effort to come together. Custer's bulldog courage alone prevented it.

The next day Sheridan advanced toward Gordonsville, Custer and his brigade leading. A few miles out the confederate cavalry was found dismounted and intrenched. An engagement remarkable for its stubbornness followed. Hampton demonstrated that he was a hard fighter, as he had done at Haw's Shop. Fitzhugh Lee succeeded in reinforcing him at a critical moment, and it was believed at the time that Sheridan had some of Breckinridge's infantry from Gordonsville in his front, also. But that is doubtful. Custer's attack was vigorous and persistent, but not successful. The battle lasted all day and well into the night. The confederates never fought better and their losses were very heavy, including in the list of killed and wounded many officers of high rank. General Rosser was one of the wounded. Custer's

conduct of his part of the affair was brilliant in the extreme. His losses were greater than in any other engagement of the campaign, with the exception of Haw's Shop. That night, Sheridan retreated and rejoined the army. He had not succeeded in taking Lynchburg or in finding Hunter, but he had relieved the army of the Potomac of the presence of the troublesome confederate cavalry while it was accomplishing its change of base.

The planning and fighting of a battle, with its artful maneuvers and tactical stratagems, have been compared to a game of chess. To my mind, no cavalry engagement of the civil war had more points of resemblance to the moves of knights and pawns upon the chessboard than did the first day at Trevilian Station. Custer is said to have been a lover of the game of chess. If so, he certainly never found more difficulty in achieving a checkmate than when he attacked Hampton's rear only to find himself "checked" by Fitzhugh Lee's sudden appearance in his own rear. Both played the game with much skill but there was no checkmate at last. It was a drawn game, brilliantly though Custer played it.

Most of the month of June, 1864, was consumed in the return march to the army. July was a month of comparative exemption from the strenuous and dangerous operations which had fallen to the cavalry, and which extended over a period of fifty-six days of constant marching and fighting, oftentimes by night and day. From May 6 to June 12, Custer's brigade lost 148 officers and men killed. From May 6 to June 26 it lost 269 killed and wounded. Thirty-three were killed at

Yellow Tavern; forty-two at Haw's Shop; forty-one at Trevilian Station; one hundred and sixteen in the three battles. Custer himself was not even wounded.

August 3, Custer and his Michigan brigade bade farewell to the army of the Potomac, and embarking on transports, steamed away to Washington, whence they marched to the Shenandoah Valley, arriving at Halltown, in front of Harper's Ferry, August 10, in time to take part in the forward movement of the army of the "Middle Military Division"—a new department including West Virginia, the Shenandoah Valley and Harper's Ferry—over which General Sheridan was to exercise supreme command.

The Shenandoah Valley campaign of 1864, which began August 10 and ended October 19, at Cedar Creek, a period of but seventy days, was epochal in its importance. Its results were far reaching. It marked the beginning of the end of the tragedy of the civil war. After Cedar Creek, the valley was no longer tenable by a hostile force. This storehouse of the confederacy had been stripped clean of everything that could contribute to the maintenance of an army. To use Grant's expressive phrase: "A crow flying over this region will have to carry its own rations." Grant had nothing to fear from that direction. Thenceforth the confederacy was but an empty shell, about which that silent soldier gradually tightened his iron grip until he crushed it at Appomattox.

Sheridan was the real hero of that epoch. He did his work thoroughly and well. Through it all, Custer was his right arm. He it was who struck

the hardest and most effective blows. At Front Royal, August 16, his genius flashed out like a shining star when, after checking Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry, he caught the head of Anderson's division of infantry amid stream as it was fording the Shenandoah river and smashed it, capturing hundreds of prisoners. At Shepherdstown, August 25, when left in the lurch by Torbert, and surrounded by Breckinridge's infantry, he extricated his brigade from its perilous position by the most imperturbable coolness and brilliant strategy. At Winchester, September 19, he charged across the Opequon creek in the face of infantry sharpshooters behind piles of rails. He charged, mounted, upon infantry lines behind stone fences. From early in the morning he kept up a running and relentless pursuit. He scattered Early's mounted cavalry like leaves before a blast. He paused not for volleys of musketry or enfilading artillery fire. At the last, he "rushed like a whirlwind" down a slope upon swarms of infantry on the open plain and, his red necktie troopers close behind him, captured more prisoners than he had officers and men under him.

Here will I pause. That was the last great battle in which Custer led the Michigan brigade. Alas! and alas! He was to be our leader no longer. Thenceforth the Wolverines must fain be content to serve under others, fated to look on with sad faces while the troopers of other states followed the red and blue emblem in the places which had known the Michigan cavalry so long but would know them no more forever. That, however, was no fault of General Custer. He wanted to take his old brigade with him into the Third cavalry division. There is

plenty evidence of that. He hoped and expected that the transfer would be made. But through some mysterious and malign influence this was prevented. It was an open secret, however, at the time, that Sheridan had given Custer what the latter believed to be an assurance that his wishes were to be respected.

Winchester singled Custer out for a higher command. September 26, Averill having been relieved from command of the Second division, Custer was ordered to take his place. But before he could reach his new command, James H. Wilson was sent to Sherman, in the west, and Custer placed in command of the Third division. It was the Third division which had won such honors under Kilpatrick the previous year with Custer and Davies as its brigade commanders. But Davies had gone to the Second division when Custer went to the First, and the old Third, the same only in name, had lost much of its elan. In the campaign of 1864 it had to be content to follow where others led. From the Rapidan to the James, the First division had been "the lancehead of the cavalry." What a change! Under Custer the Third division came to its own again. It was now the "lancehead." From Tom's Brook to Waynesborough; and from Winchester to Appomattox—at Sailor's Creek, at Five Forks, everywhere during the quick, effective and one-sided campaign of 1865—the Third division was always in advance—the avenging force that, with inexorable persistence, flew at the fleeing and disintegrating columns of the confederate armies, driving Lee to bay, at last, and compelling his surrender. It was Custer who was first at the death.

It was Custer who clipped the brush. He received the flag of truce. He won this high commendation from Sheridan that no man deserved more than he from his country for his part in the closing scenes of the war tragedy.

Custer's spectacular ride in the "grand review" formed a fitting finale to his record in the civil war. The president of the United States, the congress, the supreme court, the cabinet, the heads of departments, high dignitaries both civil and military, ambassadors and ministers of foreign nations, were assembled in the immense grand stand, in front of the White House, to witness the greatest military pageant of modern times, if not of all times. The great army of Grant and the great army of Sherman were to pass in review. Pennsylvania avenue, from the capitol to the White House, and far beyond in either direction, was lined on both sides with an eager and enthusiastic multitude of spectators, numbering hundreds of thousands.

On the first day, Custer riding at the head of his division which led the parade, picturesque, if not spectacular to the last, bestrode a thorough bred stallion, named Don Juan, captured in North Carolina and valued at ten thousand dollars. The horse, more accustomed to the bucolic quietude of his rural harem than to the bustle and roar of Pennsylvania avenue at such a time as that, finally took fright at the demonstrations made in honor of his rider and ran away. Beyond control, he rushed like "Black Auster" up the avenue. Between the lines of wondering people, past the treasury building, past the grand stand, he sped in his mad career, and was not checked until he had passed out

of sight. Custer did not forget to salute as he "looked toward" the amazed spectators on the reviewing stand.

Here this sketch might fittingly end. The statue is a memorial of him as an officer of volunteers in the civil war. The book for which this is written is a souvenir of the statue and its dedication. But, inasmuch as the president of the United States in his address at the unveiling treated of Custer as an officer of regulars in Indian warfare, on the plains, I venture in conclusion to touch briefly upon Custer's Last Fight.

The reorganization of the regular army which followed the civil war found Custer lieutenant colonel of the Seventh cavalry, a new regiment. The officers, field and line, were for the most part if not entirely, men who had served in the volunteers, many of them with much higher rank. The actual command of the regiment fell to Custer, as the colonel never joined it. During the ten years —from 1866 to 1876—under the influence of his personality the Seventh cavalry made a record which equaled, if it did not surpass, the best traditions of the old army. During that period the Indian question became acute and there were constant outbreaks of the red men, while the little force of regulars on duty on the plains had more than it could do to keep the "hostiles" in subjection.

In this Indian warfare Custer and his regiment, like Custer and the Third cavalry division in the last campaign of the civil war, were easily foremost. He was the most successful Indian fighter of his day, and was so regarded by all the military author-

ities. For this reason when a campaign was determined upon to end the Indian troubles, he was looked upon as the proper leader.

The plan of the campaign projected for the discomfiture of the hostile Indians was to advance against them from three directions, with three isolated columns having no means of intercommunication, the idea being to surround them and prevent their "escape." One of these columns was to start from Fort Lincoln, Dakota; one from Fort Ellis in Western Montana; the other from Fort Fetterman on the Platte river in Northern Wyoming. The first column was to be commanded by General Custer; the second by General Gibbon; the third by General Crook; all under the command of General Terry, department commander. Neither General Sherman at Washington, General Sheridan at Chicago, nor General Terry at St. Paul had any exact knowledge of the numbers or location of the hostile force which it was their purpose to corral. General Terry and General Gibbon were infantry officers with slight experience in Indian warfare and scant knowledge of the country in which they were to operate. Crook, like Custer, had seen service in the Indian country but, unlike Custer, had not distinguished himself by any marked success as an Indian fighter. Terry was personally to command the Fort Lincoln column of which the Seventh cavalry under Lieutenant Colonel Custer was part.

Crook's force in round numbers consisted of about 1,300 officers and men; Gibbon's of 400; Terry's of 1,000; not exceeding 2,700 all told. The estimates made at the headquarters of the army

did not place the fighting strength of the hostiles at more than 500 to 800 warriors. The effective strength of the Seventh cavalry did not much exceed 600. Custer on the eve of his departure from the Yellowstone thought he might meet 1,000, possibly 1,500 fighting Indians. But he seems to have been alone in that opinion. The higher military authorities, from General Sherman down to General Terry, believed that either of the isolated columns could defeat the Indians. The only thing they feared was that they might get away. The only precautions to be taken were such as would prevent their "escape." There was nowhere a hint of apprehension that the Indians might get the better of the troops that were being sent against them. In his last order to Custer, dated June 22, 1876, Terry enjoined him thus:

"Should it (the trail) be found to turn towards the Little Horn, you should proceed southward, perhaps as far as the headwaters of the Tongue, and then turn towards the Little Horn, feeling constantly to your left, so as to preclude the possibility of the escape of the Indians by passing around your left flank."

And again:

"It is hoped that the Indians may be so nearly enclosed by the two columns (Custer's and Gibbon's) that their escape will be impossible."

Thus, when Custer started on his last ride the only fear that his immediate superior appeared to have was that he might permit the Indians to pass "around his left flank" and make their "escape." Not a hint of apprehension about the safety of his own command. Terry did not dream that more

than 500 to 800 warriors would be encountered and his instructions contained in his final order were explicit and could not be misinterpreted. Custer was to go in "pursuit" of the Indians and prevent their "escape." Yet, at the funeral of General Terry, the pastor who preached the sermon, giving as his authority Col. Hughes, Terry's brother-in-law and personal aide, charged that Custer disobeyed Terry's orders and recklessly rushed upon his own fate. A more cruel and unwarranted charge never was made. It was both untrue and malicious. To thus assail the character of one dead hero over the remains of another was a desecration of the sanctuary; and as far as possible removed from the spirit of charity and magnanimity that are supposed to mark the words of the teacher of the Christian religion.

The sequel showed that the available fighting strength of the hostiles was greater than, or at least fully equal to that of the three columns operating against them combined, As we have seen, Terry, Crook and Gibbon altogether did not have over 2,700 officers and men. A low estimate gives the hostiles 2,000 to 2,500. There has doubtless been much exaggeration and guess work in the published accounts, but there is little doubt that when Custer went into the fight with his 600 troopers more or less of the Seventh cavalry he was outnumbered three or four to one. The hostiles were concentrated in one place. They were armed with Winchester rifles and had plenty of fixed ammunition. They were splendid horsemen and well mounted. Custer knew all these things as no other officer knew them, and it is not strange that his face wore a serious

expression and that, during much of the time on that last fateful march, he appeared to be in thoughtful and abstracted mood.

Crook's column starting in May marched by way of Old Fort Reno on the Powder river to the headwaters of the Rosebud where, on June 17, he encountered the hostiles and was so badly worsted in a fight with them as to be practically eliminated from the campaign. The fatuous character of the plan of campaign is shown by the fact that, on the day when Crook was waging this unsuccessful battle, Major Reno with a battalion of the Seventh cavalry was scouting up the Rosebud and, although they were less than fifty miles apart, neither knew of the presence of the other on that river. The Indians were between them. Nor did Terry know of Crook's defeat until long afterwards. Reno's scout, however, disclosed the whereabouts of the hostiles. He discovered their trail and it was correctly assumed that it led to the country along the Little Big Horn.

They had driven Crook away and were preparing to meet the other columns successively as they might appear. But of this Terry knew nothing. He decided to send Custer with his regiment and the Crow and Ree scouts up the Rosebud in pursuit of the Indians whose trail Reno had found. With the remainder of his own and all of Gibbon's command he was to move up the Big Horn to the mouth of the Little Horn, thus preventing the "escape" of the enemy to the north or west, while Custer headed them off to the south and east. In that way was he to circumvent Sitting Bull, the reputed head man of all the hostile Indians.

And here one word as to that redoubtable chief. As a leader of fighting men he was a myth. He had some reputation and influence as a "medicine man" but was in reality a coward and fakir. When Custer attacked the Sioux camp, Sitting Bull took his two wives and his twin children and ran away, not stopping until he was eight or ten miles from the battlefield, to which he did not return until the fighting was over. Then he came back with a flourish and said that he had been in the mountains "propitiating the evil spirits and invoking the gods of war." The real leaders of the Indians who defeated Custer were Gall, Crow King, and Crazy Horse. These were all Sioux chiefs, though the latter was affiliated with the Cheyennes through having a Cheyenne woman for his wife. He was chiefly responsible for Crook's defeat and he led the Cheyennes in the battle of the Little Big Horn.* After the battle of June 17, in which Crazy Horse defeated Crook, all the hostiles united under Gall, Sitting Bull "making medicine" and predicting dire disaster to the whites.

The distance from the mouth of the Rosebud to the camp of the hostiles on the Little Horn was about ninety miles. Custer started on his march June 22 in the afternoon. He moved twelve miles and encamped. Early in the evening officers' call summoned the officers to his quarters and a long conference was held. According to General E. S. Godfrey, who was at that time lieutenant commanding troop K, of the Seventh, and whose article published in the Century magazine for January,

*My Friend The Indian, by James McLaughlin.

1892, is the best account of the march and battle that has been written, it was not a cheerful meeting. Custer was plainly depressed. He seemed to defer to the ideas of the other officers, something very unusual with him. Full instructions were given as to the details of the march; troop commanders were cautioned to keep within supporting distance of each other; they were assured that he relied fully upon their discretion, judgment and loyalty; he explained that he believed the Seventh cavalry able to cope successfully with any force it was likely to meet; and that in his judgment the enemy would not be able to bring into action more than 1,500 fighting braves at the most. His tone was ingratiating and pleading—so far removed from that which he usually employed that one of his officers remarked as they were walking away from the interview:

"Godfrey, I believe that General Custer is going to be killed."

"Why do you think so?" said Godfrey.

"Because, I never heard him talk that way before."*

June 23, starting at five o'clock in the morning and going into camp at five in the afternoon, the column covered thirty-three miles. The trail of the Indians became distinct and the pony droppings and other signs indicated a very large party. The scouts were active and vigilant but perturbed, and the half-breed interpreter predicted that they were going to have "a —— big fight." Custer rode with the advance and was in constant communica-

*Custer's Last Battle, by General E. S. Godfrey.

tion with the Indian scouts who seemed to become more and more impressed with the magnitude of the task which they had undertaken. The general was habitually grave, reticent and thoughtful.

June 24, the march was slow, painstaking and tedious. The scouts did their work thoroughly and frequent halts were made so as not to get ahead of them. Signs were plentiful and unmistakable. Signal fire smokes were seen. About sundown camp was made after marching twenty-eight miles. This was seventy-three miles from the starting point. At 11:30 the march was resumed and, at 2:00 a. m., the 25th, a halt was made after marching ten miles. Up to this time, it had been the intention of the general to get as near the divide as possible and not cross it until the next night, keeping his command under cover, his plan being to make the attack on the Indian village at daylight, or before daylight on the 26th. At eight o'clock he broke camp and marched till 10:30, making ten miles and secreted his command in a ravine.

While here he seems to have concluded that further attempts at concealment were useless, that the enemy was aware of his approach and that to carry out his orders to prevent their escape it would be necessary to attack the camp at once. He had personally verified the report of the scouts as to the location of the hostiles on the west side of the river, the camp extending some three or four miles along the river from its upper to its lower end. He gave orders to advance to the attack and, soon after starting, divided his regiment into three

battalions—one of three troops under Major Reno; one of three troops under Captain Benteen; and one of five troops under his own immediate command. One troop brought up the rear with the pack train which carried the reserve ammunition. Reno had the advance, closely followed by Custer. Benteen was directed to go several hundred yards to the left and "pitch into" anything that he met. In this way the river was approached, opposite the upper end of the village. When Reno arrived pretty close to the river, Custer ordered him to cross, advance as rapidly as he deemed prudent, and when he struck the village to charge it and he would be supported by "the entire outfit." Custer then turned to the right along a ridge parallel with the river with the obvious purpose of attacking the village lower down at the same time that Reno made his charge. Custer's march was within plain sight of the Indian camp, but Reno's approach was unseen and the Indians were taken by surprise. No intimation of danger from that direction had come to the Indians until bullets from Reno's carbines began to whiz through the tepees. This it was that caused the flight of Sitting Bull. Undoubtedly Custer exposed his column to view in order to divert attention from Reno's movement. It is also certain that he expected Reno to obey his order to charge the village, and believed that it would give him (Custer) an opportunity to strike an effective blow lower down. Reno's attack struck terror into the village and, if it had been pressed, as Custer thought it would be, the stampede which Sitting Bull started might have become general. But, unfortunately,

it was not pressed. Reno headed a stampede back across the river into the hills. Gall and the fighting braves who had hurried from the lower end of the camp, where they had been watching Custer, to meet Reno's unexpected attack, after following him across the river had time to return to the lower end and take part in the destruction of Custer and his battalion. They even used the guns and ammunition and rode the horses which they had captured from Reno in his retreat. Reno's ignominious retreat allowed the entire force of hostiles to concentrate in front of Custer. When Gall, after driving Reno to the hills, returned to the lower end of the camp where Crazy Horse was with the Cheyennes, Custer's column was still some distance away. Reno had as much time to go to Custer's relief as Gall had to return and get into the fight with Custer, but he does not appear to have had a thought of going to the aid of his chief.

The last that was seen of Custer alive was when Reno after crossing the river was advancing toward the Indian village. He waved his hat as if to encourage Reno and his men, a cheer was heard and then he moved on to do his part. The trail and the accounts given by the Indians show that he did not swerve from his purpose to attack the Indian camp until he was overwhelmed by the combined force of the hostiles all concentrated against the five troops which went to death with him.

At the time when Custer was seen to wave his hat and his men were heard to cheer, he seems to have begun to realize, if he had not suspected it

before, that the hostile force was greater than even he had estimated, for an order written by Cook, the adjutant, was despatched by a trumpeter to Benteen which read as follows:

"Benteen, come on, big village. Be quick. Bring packs. P. S. Bring packs."

The imperative character of the order is apparent at a glance.

"Come on! Be quick! Big village! Bring packs! Bring packs!" could have but one meaning. Benteen was needed. The necessity of having the reserve ammunition at hand had become apparent. Reno was attacking the village and Custer was going to support the attack by assailing it lower down, but he wanted Benteen with his three troops and the pack train with its one troop and its ammunition, making four troops in all, which would very nearly double the force which he had with him. Besides, it was essential that Benteen be brought into the engagement in order to support Reno with "the whole outfit" as he had promised. He had no reason to doubt that Benteen when he received that order would certainly "Come on" and "Be quick" about it. Also, he had no reason to doubt that Reno would hold the attention of the hostiles, who were not numerous in his front, until Custer reinforced by Benteen could reach the point of attack toward which they were moving. Benteen had plenty of time to overtake Custer if he had zealously and in good faith obeyed the order to "Come on!" and "Be quick!" The trumpeter who brought the order went back and was killed with the others. Custer's march was slow. He was clearly

looking for Benteen to join him before making the attack. If he suspected that Reno had been driven back, he had a right to suppose that both Reno and Benteen would make the effort to come to his aid, for he could see that the Indians were concentrating in his own front. Disappointed in this, he must have concluded that it was his duty to go ahead and support Reno "with the whole outfit" as he had promised, perilous as he must have deemed it to do this with his small force. He doubtless waited till all hope of help was lost and then with a brave heart went to his death.

Reno disobeyed his orders when he failed to charge the village. If he had done that, it is the testimony of the Indians who were there, says McLaughlin, that he would have thrown it into such a state of consternation at the time when Sitting Bull ran away that the diversion would have materially aided Custer's movement. If Reno had not stampeded to the hills on the other side of the river, Benteen would have obeyed his order to "Come on" and "Be quick." He would have overtaken Custer and the result might have been different. Reno ran away to the hills without making any fight at all, to speak of. Benteen came up, found him there and was ordered to remain with him. That was at 2:30. Custer was not defeated till 3 o'clock. After Benteen joined Reno, two distinct volleys were heard in the direction where Custer was. Godfrey's opinion is that they were fired as signals. Who will say that, if Reno had taken up the march immediately with the seven troops that he then had with him, in the direction

of the sound of that firing, there would not have been a different story to tell of the battle of the Little Big Horn?

The result is known. General Sherman said that when he came in contact with the Indians Custer had no alternative but to fight. His orders from General Terry contemplated that he should go out in "pursuit" of the Indians and prevent their "escape." Nothing could be plainer or more explicit than those orders. Everything else was left to Custer's judgment. "Do not allow them to escape by passing to the southeast around your left flank" was the sum and substance of those final orders. It was for this purpose, of course, that Benteen's battalion was sent out on the left flank, but when it was found that the Indians, so far from retreating and trying to escape were in reality waiting for a fight, the necessity for this flanking movement was at an end. Benteen was called in by a peremptory order which read: "Benteen, come on! Be quick! Big village! Bring packs! Bring packs!" The very wording of the order indicates its urgency. When Custer went to the high point overlooking the valley where the Sioux and their allies were encamped he saw that it was a "big village"—much bigger than he or anybody else had foreseen—that the Indians were not running away; that immense herds of ponies were grazing in the distance; that the hostiles were on the alert and awaiting his approach; he could not turn back. He must go on and support Reno with the whole outfit, Benteen included.

But, what of Benteen? He had not yet come

into the fight. "Come on! Benteen! Be quick! Bring packs! Bring packs! Big village!"

Halting only long enough to dictate this earnest and urgent appeal—this positive order—which from any officer receiving it demanded instant obedience; and which any soldier of the heroic mold would die rather than to disobey; and resting in the assurance that it would be obeyed, Custer went on to his duty and his doom.

The despatch was received by the officer to whom it was sent. It was placed in the hands of Captain Benteen. It reached its destination in time. But Benteen did not come. He found Reno cowering in the hills and reported to him. Both of these officers, after their junction, heard the volleys fired as signals for them to "come on" and "be quick." They heard but did not heed. And while they hesitated Custer and his little band of heroes were done to death. Not a single one escaped to tell the story of how it was done.

Two days later Terry with Gibbon's column came up from the north and west. The Indians had escaped around Gibbon's flank. Reno and Benteen were there. They had saved their lives, but Custer and two hundred and sixteen of his officers and men lay dead, naked and mutilated on the field where they fought. Custer and Captain Keogh were the only ones who escaped mutilation after death.

Thus died our hero. A modest stone erected by the government marks the spot where he fell. His remains, easily identified, were removed and interred at West Point on the Hudson, a fitting place of

sepulture for one who never failed in his duty to his country, his family or to his own manhood. "May he rest in peace" and may his memory ever be kept green is the wish of every survivor of those who fought under him and knew his sterling worth as a soldier and as a man.*

*An article by General Nelson A. Miles in the Cosmopolitan Magazine for June, 1911, which came to hand when I was reading the proof of the foregoing, intimates that Gall and his force of Indians, after driving Reno to the hills, did not recross the river but followed Custer's trail, thus placing themselves between Reno and Custer on the same side, attacking Custer's rear and left flank when Crazy Horse and the others, crossing the river lower down, came in on his front and right flank.

This makes it all the worse for Reno and Benteen. If they had advanced when the volleys were fired after their junction this would have prevented Gall's successful attack on Custer. Fifteen minutes would have brought them into the action. J. H. K.

"The Last Charge"

By Leavitt Hunt

In yon ravine, with teeming life,
Two thousand lodges rise;
The Sioux in camp, but ever rife,
The war-path watch, with gun and knife,
Well armed against surprise.

But now our comrades strike the trail,
Hail! Small devoted band!
Three hundred of the Seventh, hail!
Whoever knew a charge to fail
With Custer in command?

Dare Custer charge that savage lair
Where duty means to die?
Gives answer quick the trumpet's blare
That sounds his last command in air:
"In column—charge—by company!"

Whom summons this last bugle call
To charge the deadly pace?
His brothers, kinsmen, doomed to fall,
They number five, but they are all
Akin to Custer's race.

Let fall the rein, the chargers dash
Like tigers in a den;
Barred in, they fall 'neath rifle crash,
But, falling, deal the deadly gash;
They are but one to ten.

At eve all lay, by death enrolled,
In ghastly bivouac.
Alone Death stalked, the story told
Of men of more than Spartan mold,
That column of attack.

The sun sank down deep-dyed in blood,
    When, lo! a phantom shade
Of kindred spirits capped with hood
In battle line, to greet them, stood
    The deathless Light Brigade.

In low salute their colors dip,
    As Custer moves before;
Their sabres sink, in veteran grip,
One gleam illumines every tip,
    To comrades, as of yore.

They wheel in rear, with pennon lance,
    An escort, man for man;
Their champing chargers proudly prance,
Through arch of glory they advance
    And Custer leads the van."

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